

CHAPTER ONE

“You’re sure you want to do this?”

“Yes, Harry. I’ve thought this through. You know my reasons and I understand the risks.”

Harry shook his head. “I know... it’s just...” Harry sighed. “I mean...”

“I want to do this, Harry.” Dudley said softly. “Now quit being such a pansy and stick it in already.”

Harry stopped moving and thought back to how he got to this point.

It all started three weeks ago, when Harry’s cousin, Dudley Dursley beat up on a dozen Hogwarts’ first years in a magical duel. After his win, Dudley was kind and courteous and more than kept his end of the deal. And so now, Harry was obligated to help him find a magical solution to Dudley’s weight problem.

Two weeks ago, Harry had determined all the traditional methods as being temporary solutions. And Dudley was firm in that he wanted something permanent, if possible.

One week ago, Harry had resigned himself to accepting the fact that the only way he’d found to make it permanent was with Dementor Blood. And as such, there was a fair amount of unknowns, seeing as this was a magical treatment that had never been attempted before.

And now, having exhausted all of his potential scenarios and prepared counters to negative situations, Harry had found a way that should convert Dudley’s fat into ambient energy, as well as permanently changing his body’s metabolism.

Theoretically.

Harry had told Dudley, this was extremely dangerous and highly risky. He was advising strongly against doing it, but upon questioning Harry had to admit, that yes, he was nearly one hundred percent certain

that it would work. This was apparently all the reassurance Dudley needed.

“Give it to me, Harry.” Dudley pleaded. “This anticipation is killing me. Just stick it in already.”

And so Harry did.

One of the main ingredients in the potion was concentrated Dementor Blood, which is a highly magical substance that becomes tricky, as ingesting it orally is usually fatal. Potions that are undrinkable are especially troublesome. Often they are turned into a salve, but that concentrated Dementor Blood usually meant this would be a flesh-eating salve. Luckily Harry had been taught by Wesley Thatcher, the previous Nicholas Flamel, how some potions worked better and stronger when injected straight into the bloodstream. Most often with the person unconscious, as it was quickly discovered to be an extremely painful process. Though Dudley insisted on remaining awake if possible. Harry agreed only to knock him out, if it became apparent that it would be necessary.

This is why Harry had a large syringe filled with thick black substance with streaks of a creamy light yellow running through it. And why he was presently sticking it right into the thick of Dudley’s left ass cheek.

“Oww!” Dudley yelped. “Good gravy, Potter.”

“I haven’t even pushed on the stopper, that’s just the needle so far.”

“What are you waiting for? A cookie? Let’s get this show on the road.”

Harry took a deep breath and then began to depress on the syringe sending the concoction in Dudley’s bloodstream.

“Ahhhhhh!” Dudley began screaming at the top of his lungs. “Ahhhhhh!” he continued on, gasping for breath occasionally.

Harry looked around the Privet Drive living room. Those silencing charms were getting a decent test at the moment. Harry dictated to

himself. "Subject appears to be in considerable pain. More than anticipated."

Dudley jumped up and began running around the living room stomping on the ground in anger. "Ahhhhhh!"

"Correction: Subject may just be a wuss." Harry stated before alerting, "Careful Dudley! Those vials still have traces of the potion in them and are very volatile."

Dudley just turned to look at Harry oddly and was screaming even louder. "Ahhhhhh!" Dudley began knocking things over stumbling around the room.

Harry was watching Dudley's minor rampage and took a bit of pleasure in seeing so many picture frames crash to the floor. Dudley's screaming let up for just a second as he gasped for breath, but in that time Harry heard a sound he was not expecting to hear, the sound of a car door closing.

Harry's eyes went wide. "Dammit Dudley, you said your parents were going to be gone all weekend." Harry hurried to the front window and saw his Aunt Petunia and Uncle Vernon walking up to their front door. "This isn't going to be..." Harry turned back to Dudley and his eyes went wider as he screamed, "No!"

Dudley in all his ruckus immediately spotted something useful to him. One of the magic sticks Harry had given Dudley had rolled right to him. Dudley was holding in his screaming finally and leaned over the couch. He aimed the stick right at his left butt cheek where the giant syringe was still stuck in his ass. He commanded "Stun!" in an attempt to numb the pain right as he heard his cousin scream, "No!"

The spell hit and simply exploded in a magical shockwave that knocked Harry off his feet. Dudley himself got launched through the air and crashed in the wall nearly knocking it down.

Petunia and Vernon rushed into their living room and saw Dudley unconscious slumped against the wall. "Dudders!" Petunia screamed

and ran over to him. Vernon quickly followed her, equally worried about his son.

Harry hadn't lost consciousness but he was extremely woozy. His mind and vision seemed unable to focus. Petunia told Vernon to hurry and hand her that glass of water on the coffee table. Harry had to process that thought a few times before he realized there was no glass of water on the coffee table. On the other hand there was a clear glass full of a purified, balanced mixture of basilisk venom and phoenix tears, in case Harry needed what was essentially a magical adrenaline shot.

Harry eyes snapped open and again he yelled, "No!" He flung his arm out and immediately cast a large stasis field in the direction the Dursleys all were. Harry held his hand steady as he groggily sat up and looked at the scene. Petunia and Vernon, frozen in stasis, were both covered in blood and Petunia had poured almost half the glass down Dudley's throat. The blood was Dudley's as it appeared he cracked his head open on the wall when he tried to stun his own ass.

Harry quickly processed all the elements of the scene before him. He accurately assessed his situation and screamed "Fuck!" If Harry was correct, and he almost assuredly was, Dudley had just about combined every volatile component or trigger relating to Dementor Blood, and was awfully close to turning into a big tubby magic bomb. Petunia and Vernon could have been saved, were they not already covered in Dudley's blood, which had the potion running through it. Anything further cast on them would only ignite it. And even still, as it is, it was probably starting to eat through their clothing anyway.

Not only could Harry tell that they were in for a serious magical backlash at best, but Harry's stasis field was not just temporarily holding it off. It was fueling it to make it bigger. The longer Harry kept the field up, the bigger they were all going to blow. So now Harry had to make a decision as quickly as he possibly could and enact a plan immediately.

Right away, only one possible thing came to mind for Harry and so after two seconds of contemplation he knew he had to give it a shot. In the space of less than a second, Harry dropped the stasis,

apparated right next to the Dursleys, knocked the glass of venom and tears out of Petunia's hands, and grabbed Dudley, Petunia, and Vernon into a tight hug.

Remembering all he could about the references to the alleged spell, Harry did his best to replicate the shield of love his mother had theoretically cast on him just before she died from Voldemort's curse.

Harry just hoped he knew what he was doing and that he loved the Dursleys enough.

Dobby immediately felt his Master's distress call. Dobby certainly couldn't ever remember feeling anything that strongly over their bond. He popped right next to his Master and found him singed and smoldering, but alive and unconscious. He noticed the three members of his Master's old family were all in similar conditions. But the house Dobby remembered coming to when he first met the Great Wizard Harry Potter appeared to have completely vaporized. Given the melted curvature of what remained of the neighboring houses, Dobby could tell Great Wizard Harry Potter managed to keep a massive explosion contained. Dobby grabbed a hold of Harry and transported him to a bed in one of their secret locations. Dobby went back and did the same with the three unconscious Dursleys. After looking around the blackened hole in the ground that was once Number Four Privet Drive, Dobby found nothing else to bring back to his Master.

Dobby could tell Harry wasn't hurt enough to warrant alerting a healer. He needed rest more than anything, so Dobby left him sleeping in his bed and put the unconscious Dursleys into makeshift beds of their own.

The first thing Harry realized as he woke up was that he had a massive headache. He slowly opened a single eye and just groaned in pain.

"Master!" Dobby exclaimed. "Water and pepper-up." Dobby stated as he handed Harry a glass and a vial.

Harry drank the water first, downed the pepper-up, and winced at the sound of steam coming from his ears. He finished off another glass of water. "Alright Dobby, what did I do now?"

Dobby chuckled. "You blew up another one. This time it was your old house on Privet Drive."

"The Dursleys! Dudley!" Harry yelled as he shot up from his bed.

"Master!" Dobby scolded. "They is here and still unconscious."

"They're alive?" Harry asked seriously.

Dobby nodded. "Yes, Master. Theys no worse off than you. Although, your cousin has a big needle in his butt cheek."

Harry took in the rest of his surroundings and began to chuckle. "I wonder how Salazar would like the idea of muggles resting comfortably in his Chamber."

Dobby paused and stated, "You only been out for about two hours, but I didn't think any of you needed a healer."

"Thank you, Dobby." Harry stated as he got up and walked over towards the other makeshift beds. "Without your help, I don't even want to think of the amount of trouble I'd be in."

"Yes, well," Dobby smiled. "Dobby almost expects these sorts of things from you, Master."

Harry frowned at the cheek the little house elf was giving him, before smiling and nodding. He looked over Dudley first and saw he appeared significantly thinner, but overall in decent health. The head wound Dudley had received had looked worse than it was. Dobby apparently had cleaned the wound and wrapped a hunk of gauze over the area. Sure enough the syringe was still sticking up in the air, attached to Dudley's butt cheek.

Harry looked at Petunia and Vernon and saw they seemed to be sleeping almost peacefully, without any visible damage or injuries to them. Harry decided to take the syringe out of Dudley's ass and wrenched it loose with a yank. Doing so apparently stirred Dudley enough to bring him back to consciousness.

He was slowly regaining his focus. He looked over and just stared at Harry oddly. He then looked down at his own body. "Ahhhhhh!"

"What's the matter?" Harry asked. "You still in pain?"

"Ahhhhhh!" He said staring at his own arms and body. "When the hell did I get so fat?"

Harry furrowed his brow. "Err, Dudley, you've lost probably 80 pounds already."

"Dudley?" he asked confusedly.

"Bloody hell," Vernon said as he sat up. "Great Godric, my head hurts. What the bloody hell happened?"

Petunia rubbed the crust from her eyes and sat up too. "Owww..." she whined. She looked over to her husband, and asked horrified, "Vernon?"

Vernon winced horribly noticing his wife next to him. He spat out her name like it was particularly foul, "Petunia?"

Petunia seemed to recognize that tone of voice, and asked in a softer, shocked voice, "James?"

Vernon's eyes almost bulged out of his head. "Lils?"

"You're disgustingly obese..." Petunia said as she looked at her husband.

Vernon nodded. "Let me close my eyes so I don't have to look at you." He said as he reached out and grabbed his wife in a hug.

Dudley just watched Petunia and Vernon embrace and finally accepted the fact that, yes, this was most definitely something only his Godson could ever do. He smiled and said, "Bloody hell, Harry."

“What have I done?” Harry asked Dudley horrified, and still unsure of what was going on.

Dudley finally settled on barking out familiar laughter and shaking his finger at Harry. “Oh this is so you.”

Vernon recognized that laugh and finger shake immediately. He blurted out, “Padfoot?”

Harry turned to Dudley and his mind finally realized where he had in fact heard a laugh like that before. Harry dropped his head into his hands and said, “Oh you have got to freaking kidding me!”

Dudley seemed to be biting his tongue, and looked over to Petunia and Vernon for help. Finally, he couldn’t take it and he answered back, “Nope,” He was holding in snickers. His entire body was twittering in restrained laughter as he could not hold this in. “I’m dead Sirius!”

Petunia’s eyes flared. She began looking around. “Where’s my wand? It’s my turn to hurt him.” Petunia was frantically trying to locate a wand. Finally she gave up and chucked her shoe as hard as she could at Dudley. Good aim too, as she managed to hit him on the gauze and aggravate his head wound.

“Owww!” Dudley yelled. “Merlin’s balls, woman. Your aim hasn’t deteriorated any. And I should be allowed that one. It’s the first time it’s ever been true!”

Vernon looked shocked. He slowly questioned, “You’re... dead... Sirius?”

Dudley used his hand to keep pressure on his head wound, and nodded. “Yup. You too, Prongsy, old boy.”

Vernon looked like someone just canceled his Christmas. He turned to his wife. “Dead? Lils, are you dead?”

Petunia nodded. “I died right after you did. I tried to protect Harry, I really did. I’m sorry.” Petunia sagged as though she were a failure.

Dudley looked over at Harry and saw that he had yet to even look up from his hands. "Err, Lils, for what it's worth, you did protect Harry. He lived."

Petunia turned to Dudley with a hopeful look on her face. "How do you know? You're dead too. You said it yourself."

Dudley looked again at Harry before replying, "I know because I died about fifteen years after you two did, when Harry was about to finish his fifth year at Hogwarts."

"Harry?" Vernon perked up to ask. "He's alive?"

Dudley smiled and rolled his eyes. He pointed to the young man who had still yet to look up. Petunia and Vernon both snapped the heads towards where Dudley was pointing.

"Harry?" Petunia asked, slightly afraid of what the answer would be.

Harry just kept his face down and covered with his right hand. He raised his left into the air and waved. "Hi mum."

"Bloody hell, James. He looks just like you," Petunia said.

Vernon frowned. "How can you tell? He hasn't even looked up..." Vernon was interrupted by Harry looking up. "Bloody hell, you look just like me."

Petunia rolled her eyes.

"Damn good looking you are." Vernon added.

Harry dropped his face back into his hands with a mirthless chuckle and went back to his thinking.

"Err, alright then." Vernon said as the young man that seemed to be his son went back to his musings. "So Padfoot, any idea what's going on? And why we're so fat?"

Dudley shrugged. "I have nothing supporting this theory mind you, other than a complete and absolute certainty that it has everything to do with my Godson over there. But considering the last thing I remember is dying, I think we should just wait until he feels up to sharing with the group."

"Sorry," Harry mumbled. "This day is turning out a bit differently than I was expecting. This is a lot to take in."

"You're telling me," Vernon said. "Course I wasn't expecting to have any more days turn out at all," Vernon said lightly. "So take your time."

"Harry?" Petunia asked looking around the chamber they seemed to be resting in. "Can you tell us how we got here?"

Harry looked up and was visibly tired. He nodded.

When Vernon saw Harry wasn't going to be speaking up soon, Vernon quietly said, "Whenever you're ready." He hastily added, "Please."

Harry sighed deeply. "Right. Okay. Let's see here. Without getting too verbose, I guess the short answer is that it appears I accidentally pulled your souls into the bodies of the Dursleys." Harry sat back and finished softly, "Sorry bout that."

Petunia looked at Vernon and Dudley and asked, "Could we get a longer version than that one?"

"Yeah, alright," Harry nodded. "I guess it's that I owed Dudley a favor after he beat all the first years in a magical duel, so in my research on Dementor Blood, I devised a risky but permanent solution to his weight problem. A couple of complications popped up, next thing you know just about everything extremely volatile combined and I could have escaped and left the Dursleys to die, but I instead tried to protect them with a shield of love, like Mum used on me. It appears to have not worked exactly as I'd intended, and I'm pretty sure that's thanks to the spilled Dementor Blood from where Dudley's head got

cracked open. Yada, yada, yada, and your souls are now in their bodies.”

“What?” Petunia asked confused.

“I thought Dudley was a muggle?” Dudley asked confused.

“Dementor Blood!” Vernon exclaimed.

“Why do I get the feeling that ‘yada, yada, yada’ covers most of what you still don’t know?” Dudley added with a smile while he rubbed feeling into his particularly sore butt cheek.

Harry looked at them and said, “Yes, you heard me right. Yes, he is a muggle. Yes, Dementor Blood. And yes, I still don’t know what happened. Primarily, I’ve no idea how your souls came back, or for that matter where the souls of the Dursleys went.”

“Oh right... them.” Petunia said.

“Tough break for them,” Dudley added.

Vernon gruffly grunted, “They probably deserved it.”

Harry frowned, contemplating the magical explosions. “I need time to think about this.”

Dudley looked at Vernon and Petunia and shrugged. “Err... alright, Harry. I’ll try and catch these two up on what I know, but we could use a little background on...”

“Oh, right. Yeah. Hold on a sec.” Harry interrupted and vanished as Dudley finished his sentence “...current events.”

“Did he just apparate without even standing up?” Vernon asked with a glimmer of pride.

Dudley nodded. “I don’t think I even heard a sound.”

“Mooooooooooooony!” Harry called out. “I need you!”

“Harry!” Remus exclaimed. “I was wondering if I might hear from you. And you need me, eh? This one of those times you need my help?”

Harry sighed heavily. “Yeah, I definitely could use your help.”

“Alright Harry,” Remus agreed. “I’ll take care of the bodies this time, but if this happens again-”

“No, no. It’s not that, here, just come with me.” Harry grabbed onto Remus and popped them both back to the Chamber of Secrets.

Remus looked at his surroundings and did not recognize the place. He spotted Harry’s relatives talking amongst themselves, though he swore he heard Dudley say something about Lord Buggermort. “The Dursleys are alive?”

“Err... here, you just talk to them. I need to think.” Harry walked over and introduced them. “Moony, I’m sure you remember the Dursleys. This is Lily, James, and Sirius. Or as I like to call them Mum, Dad, and... Sirius. I trust you all can find something to talk about.”

Remus just stared at Harry, fearing what the young man had done. “Are you serious?”

Dudley began to open his mouth, when he got whacked on the back of the head by Petunia. “Don’t even think about it.”

“Good god woman,” Dudley yelled as he rubbed the back of his head. “I’m really starting to miss you less and less.”

Vernon looked over at Remus and gasped. “Cheese and rice, Moony. You look older than Padfoot’s underwear.”

Remus heard Vernon Dursley’s voice, and saw Vernon Dursley in front of him, but that was exactly Prongs’ attitude. “What the hell are you?”

Petunia rubbed her nose. “Well, I know we were dead, Remus, so I’m not really sure.”

"We're fatter," Dudley said.

"And uglier," Vernon said.

"Every bit as confused though," Petunia added.

Remus looked at the three Dursleys and then back at Harry, who was now deep in thought with his face buried in his hands. Remus finally just started laughing.

Remus turned back to the Dursleys. "I don't think Harry is going to be a very good host for the moment. So ... err... Wow! Umm... Wait! Hugs!" Remus was giggling as he embraced the Dursley bodies that contained his deceased friends. He realized it was more awkward than he'd expected when he couldn't even reach his hands around James in Vernon's massive body. "So, err... what're you confused about?"

Vernon looked at Dudley and back to his wife. "I think Moony is losing it in his old age."

Remus just frowned. "I'm not that old."

"Well how old are you?" Petunia asked. "Or rather, what's the date?"

Remus thought for a second and answered, "I'm 42, for your information. It's July 12th, 2002."

"2002," Vernon repeated slowly and turned to his wife. "Our son is older than us."

Remus just shook his head. "It really is you guys."

"Course it is, Moony!" Dudley cheerfully added. "I hate to be a downer, but... Voldemort?"

"Dead." Remus said with a smile. "For good this time."

"Wonderful!" Dudley beamed. "How'd he die?"

“Err...” Remus paused. “Harry hasn’t exactly been talkative about the subject.”

“Harry,” Dudley called out to the contemplative young man. “How’d Voldemort die?”

Harry didn’t even look up as he answered immediately. “Slowly, deliberately, and in a lot of pain.”

Dudley’s eyebrows rose at that. “Nice.”

Any further questions were halted when Harry called out, “Moony! You said you were wondering if you’d hear from me. Why was that?”

“Oh,” Remus answered. “Because all of the Ministry magical sensors and detectors fried, melted, or exploded due to an unidentified magical explosion on Privet Drive. The Headmaster was trying to track you down, and get some answers. Apparently, they needed a second squadron of Obliviators, and there were some idiots calling for your arrest.”

Harry just laughed. “God I hate politics. I’m almost curious what would happen if they tried to arrest me.”

“Harry!” Petunia scolded. “Don’t even joke about that! If the Ministry is as back-asswards today as it was in our time, you could get sent to Azkaban if you anger the wrong person.”

“Azkaban!” Harry said as an idea came to him. “That’s not a bad idea.”

Dudley looked at Moony. “Have things changed that much at my old stomping grounds?”

Remus cringed. “No, not really. Same guards. But I think they like Harry.”

“Oh right,” Harry said. “Sorry about that one, Sirius. I wasn’t thinking. But for your information, it’s not that bad if you know the right people. I go over some weekends to hang out with Bob and we listen to the

Quidditch on the Wireless. A lot of drinking and unfortunately more noogies than I care for.”

Remus’ eyes lit up. “That’s why you sometimes have diseased rotting flesh in your hair!”

“Yeah,” Harry said with a shrug. “That is one of the reasons.”

Vernon and Petunia were listening to the words being said but hearing very little. Vernon blustered, “You realize me and Lils here aren’t understanding anything you guys are saying, right?” Petunia nodded at Dudley, Harry, and Remus.

Harry stood up. “I need to go talk to Bob and figure out what’s happened here. You guys just make yourselves at home and catch each other up.” Everything Harry was saying was true, but he still welcomed a bit of time away from this situation, as he was terribly confused on how he should feel right now.

“Wait, Harry!” Remus called out. “Go see Albus, just to let him know you’re okay, and not to worry or waste time looking for you.”

Harry paused and had a quick conversation with Hogwarts. “Alright.” He nodded to Moony.

“Wait, before you go.” Dudley exclaimed. “Where are we?”

Harry smiled. “The Chamber of Secrets. Underneath a section of the grounds here at Hogwarts.”

Petunia and Vernon began looking around a bit fearfully, while Dudley began to snicker.

Remus frowned. “We can’t apparate then. How do we get out of here?”

Harry shrugged. “Could be tricky without my help.”

Dudley asked, “And what if something happens to you?”

"Well," Harry shrugged. "You better hope I don't get arrested then." And with a snap of his fingers Harry disappeared leaving behind his parents and all the remaining Marauders.

"Albus?" Harry called out from the Headmaster's office. He nodded at several of the portraits.

"Harry!" the Headmaster exclaimed as he came out from his private chambers. "I'm glad to see you are unharmed."

"Yeah," Harry said. "Sorry about that. Was trying a little something out involving Dementor Blood."

Albus inclined his head, asking for more information.

Harry smiled weakly. "It didn't go quite as planned."

"I should hope not," Albus said with a frown. "It was off every scale the Ministry monitors had."

Harry didn't want to look Albus in the eye. "Oops."

"Harry," Albus continued seriously. "There are two melted shells of cars and some neighbors accounts that make it likely the Dursleys were at home at the time."

"The who?" Harry asked innocently.

"Harry," Albus scolded.

"Oh..." Harry said as though he just remembered. "Them."

Albus sighed. "Oh Harry, please tell me you didn't kill the Dursleys."

"No!" Harry exclaimed immediately. "Not really, I don't think... well..." Harry winced and finished sheepishly, "I guess it sort of depends on how you define the word... Dursley."

CHAPTER TWO

Albus sighed heavily and watched the uncomfortable squirming of the young man before him.

After a lengthy pause considering the alternatives Albus sighed again. "Say no more, Harry." Albus held up his hand to stop his Defense Professor. "I must know nothing else, so I can safely provide your alibi. We can have Severus take care of the bodies."

Harry rolled his eyes. "We don't need to worry about their bodies. They're fine."

"Then why do you not just obliviate them and let them get back to their lives?" Albus asked with a frown.

"Err, the Dursley's I'm not so sure about," Harry clarified. "But they're bodies are in normal working order." Harry smiled, "Actually, Dudley's lost some weight, so at least his is in better than normal shape."

Albus hadn't even blinked listening to Harry. "Well that is good news for Dudley's body, but it sounds like a hollow victory if Dudley is not within it to enjoy his slimmer figure."

Harry cringed but sheepishly agreed.

"Harry, I'm getting old," Albus said and did his best to ignore Harry's chortle. "And there is a very important lesson I have learned in the time I have known you: there are some times when it is better not to know. I believe I will leave it to your judgment as to whether you wish to inform me further on what happened today."

Harry frowned and considered it. "I'm still figuring out what happened, but I think you're going to need to know."

Albus settled back into his chair. "I'm all ears."

Harry cleared his throat. "Okay, without going into too much unnecessary detail-

Albus sagged. "Oh dear."

Harry ignored Albus and continued, "I basically was doing Dudley a favor with Dementor Blood, that got a few unexpected and highly volatile complications. When Dudley's blood got all over Vernon and Petunia, and she poured the venom and tears down Dudley's throat I knew he was about to explode and take most Little Whinging with him."

Albus was shaking his head in sadness. He was mumbling to himself. "You try and teach them about the dark evil magics... You try and set an example..."

Harry paid him no mind as he explained, "I knew I couldn't stop the explosion, and considering Dudley was the bomb and Vernon and Petunia were nearly guaranteed collateral damage, I did the only thing I could. I grabbed them into a hug and tried to make the shield of love my mum used to protect me."

Albus looked at Harry impressed. "Your love for the Dursleys protected them?"

Harry shrugged. "Not exactly. Still trying to work that one out."

"So what's happened to the Dursleys?"

Harry was thinking deeply about that one, wondering where their souls might be.

Albus could tell Harry didn't have an answer to that question. "Alright, here's an easier question: what's happened to the Dursleys' bodies?"

"They're awake and seem to be reasonably healthy. They're still resting but I doubt they want to stay cooped up too long." Harry responded.

"They're bodies are conscious?" Albus asked amazed. "How is that possible, if the Dursleys aren't in them?"

Harry sighed and looked around the room. He quietly mumbled something about, "because... other...in 'em."

"Louder please, Harry." Albus asked.

"Because," Harry said a bit louder. "Because... there are other people in them."

Albus face crumpled in confusion. "Who?"

"Well..." Harry said as he scratched his chin. "Aunt Petunia and Uncle Vernon are Mum and Dad, and Dudley is Sirius."

Albus' shocked gasp was cut off by the Sorting Hat blurting out, "Oh good god Potter. This is impressive even for you."

Harry scowled harshly at the stupid hat. "Moony and Sirius are probably catching up my folks on what's been happening the last couple decades."

Albus just sat there numbly.

Harry gave Albus a pointed look. "I wouldn't be surprised if they might want to have a word with you about a few things."

Albus was imagining that conversation. "Crap."

Harry tried to sit calmly but even he couldn't contain the smile that thought gave him.

"Fawkes," Albus asked his familiar. "Do you think you could..." Albus stopped as his familiar high-tailed it out of there. Apparently this would be a good time for the phoenix to do some hunting. Albus shook his head. "I swear you're making everyone and everything into insolent cheeky buggers."

Fawkes reappeared briefly just to steal Albus' hat.

Harry's eyes twinkled victoriously.

"Very well, Harry." Albus conceded. "I highly suggest we keep this information to ourselves. Accidental Necromancy would be a pretty hard sell to the Ministry, believe me. So how do we fix this?"

Harry sighed. "Right now, they're all safe in the Chamber of Secrets, and I'm going to go talk to Bob. See if he has a better idea about what happened or if this is fixable."

"Good idea," Albus admitted. "I would imagine it was the Dementor Blood that contributed most to this."

Harry nodded in quiet contemplation. "Albus... am I a bad person if I'm not sure I want to fix this?"

"Some people who made your life difficult and painful have been accidentally replaced with people who love and cherish you?" Albus summarized. "Yes, Harry, you're a horrible, rotten person for wishing you could have people who love you around."

Harry frowned at the old man's sarcasm.

"Harry," Albus sighed and answered more seriously. "It is perfectly natural and normal to be pleased with the current situation and wish it to stay the same. But I know with your heart, you will still do the right thing."

"Really?" Harry said as his face brightened.

"Which is to fix this for the Dursleys." Albus stated sternly.

"Oh fine," Harry reluctantly grumbled. "I know."

The two of them sat there in silence for a moment. "Alright," Harry said standing up. "I'm going to talk to Bob and figure out what's going on. You can tell the Ministry I'm fine and got the Dursleys out from the explosion. I'm sorry and all that rot, and to just put it on my

'Destruction of Property' tab. It was an experiment with Dementor Blood that took an unexpected turn."

Albus nodded. "We may need the Dursleys to be seen in public. Perhaps taking leaves of absence from their jobs, and rebuilding their home on Privet Drive. A few appearances for the neighbors and they can leave on a lengthy vacation."

Harry agreed and pictured Vernon going into Grunnings, "Hey muggles, I quit!"

Albus saw a smile flitter across Harry's face. "Harry, no matter how unfortunate the circumstances, do not feel guilt for taking advantage of this incredible opportunity. I remember what you saw in the Mirror of Erised when you were eleven."

Harry chuckled. "I'm not exactly the same eleven year old boy I saw reflected in that one."

Albus acknowledged the truth of that statement. "Nor are they the same people you saw reflected back then either."

Harry laughed. "No kidding. They're younger. Hell, even I'm older than my parents."

Albus started. "I hadn't realized that. Oh dear. I doubt either of their tempers has improved much then."

"Anyways," Harry said, refreshing his movements. "I'm off to find Bob. If you could clear things up at the Ministry, I would appreciate it."

Albus nodded.

Harry smirked at the Headmaster. "I'll be sure and tell Mum how helpful you've been." Harry snapped his fingers and popped away from Hogwarts.

Harry reappeared in a chilly marble throne room deep within Azkaban. He looked around and saw the place was a mess. And there, lying on

the couch, with the bottom of his cloak hanging over the side, was a snoring Dementor.

A horrible high-pitched eerie sound, followed by some quick but staggered, “Muh muh muh muh” exhales.

Harry shook his head and quietly snuck up to the resting creature. Harry silently cast the strongest petrification spell he could on it. He then began to shake the Dementor from his slumber.

“Bob?” Harry asked with concern. “Bob? Can you hear me?”

Bob woke up in a panic. “Harry? Is that you?”

“Yeah, Bob, it’s me. Listen, I managed to reattach your legs, but only time will tell what sort of damage there is to your spinal cord.”

“Oh my god!” Bob screamed. “Oh my god! I can’t move my legs! I can’t even move my arms! I can’t... wait a minute.”

Harry was all out snickering at his friend.

“Cripes, Harry,” Bob fumed. “Take this bloody spell off me, you wanker.”

Harry waved his hand and released him. “I swear, I don’t think I’ll ever get tired of doing that.”

Bob just grumbled and mock hissed at Harry.

“Sorry,” Harry said though he obviously didn’t mean it at all. “You were snoring when I arrived.”

“I don’t snore. That’s not snoring,” Bob huffed and tried to do some quick thinking. “It’s a... it’s a... it’s a mating call.”

Harry raised an eyebrow. “Well, I’m here, aren’t I?”

“Oh goody, are we going to open the can of worms entitled Harry’s love life now?” Bob asked cheerfully.

“Oh shush,” Harry scolded before settling down tiredly. “Actually, I managed a whole new can of worms today.”

Bob chuckled. “I had a feeling that was you. We all felt it, whatever you did. Need us to hide some bodies?”

“Naw. It’s not that sort of problem.” Harry sighed. “It is one for the scrapbook though, that’s for sure.”

“Oh?” Bob inquired. “Do tell.”

“Well, you remember how we worked out how to consume Dudley’s fat?”

“I believe you worked it out. You probably understand more about Dementors than any of us do.”

“Right,” Harry half-heartedly agreed. “Well, we knew there’d be some risks and unfortunately, a few of those things we know not to combine, got... combined.”

“Which things?”

“Well it was the potion, which I injected into Dudley’s bloodstream, which he then hit with a stored spell from one of the development wands.”

“Ohhhh, that can’t be good.” Bob assessed.

Harry nodded. “And then it was his blood with the potion active in it that spilled onto my Aunt and Uncle.”

Bob winced a bit. “Well, at least the flesh-eating aspects should have been diluted.”

Harry paused, “Err, that didn’t really become an issue, because my Aunt immediately poured a glass of concentrated Basilisk Venom and Phoenix Tears down Dudley’s throat.”

Bob stopped and just sat there staring at Harry.

“Yup.” Harry said.

Bob finally added, “Well... at least the planet didn’t crack in half.”

Harry nodded. “I tried to invoke an ancient shield of love, like the one my Mum used on me, to save all of the Dursleys and myself.”

Bob chuckled. “Something tells me you would have survived on your own.”

“And, now here’s where it gets fun.”

“Oh dear.”

“It appears as though the three Dursleys’ bodies now contain the souls of my deceased Godfather and parents. Moony and Sirius were updating my folks on current events when I left.”

“Wow.” Bob said amazed. “You weren’t kidding about this one. I almost want to encourage you to complain ‘that this cannot possibly get any worse’ just to see what would happen.”

“Bob,” Harry sighed. “What the hell happened? How could this have happened?”

Bob sat there pensively, tapping his bony decaying fingers. “What do you know about the shield of love you attempted to cast?”

Harry sighed. “Not much. It’s referred to reverently in a few ancient scriptures, but there’s never been a known documented case of how to invoke it. No idea how my mum ever found out about it, but all I did was just funnel as much will and intent magic as I could into protecting the Dursleys. I assumed it would be emotional and thought about what love means to me.”

Bob nodded. “And the first people you thought of were your parents and Godfather?”

Harry shrugged. "They were actually all I thought of. I lost consciousness or memory of everything immediately after that." Harry frowned. "You know I'm actually pretty curious who I would have thought of next."

Bob puffed himself up proudly. "It was probably me and I just sucked away all the rest of the people you thought of after me."

Harry gave a small chuckle. "I'm sure you're right." A companionable silence fell between them. "I've got a theory, but I'd like to hear what you think first."

Bob nodded and asked, "Did Dudley lose some weight?"

Harry nodded. "I'm guessing eighty, maybe a hundred pounds."

Bob chuckled. "I thought so."

Harry groaned.

"Yes," Bob agreed. "It sounds like the evil black magics we theorized."

Harry groaned again. "Could that really have been enough?"

Bob shrugged. "I've no idea, but it would certainly change some black magic rules if you only really needed to sacrifice a certain amount of flesh."

Harry was rubbing his tired eyes. "Or just 25 pounds of human fat, a not unreasonable amount in the average person sacrificed."

"Or just fat," Bob agreed. "But I don't know how it could reach beyond the souls the Dementor whose blood you used had trapped."

"And I know you didn't kiss Sirius or my parents. There's no reason to believe it would even be possible." Harry concurred. "Other than the fact that it happened."

Bob chuckled a little. "It sounds like your shield of love included the most volatile element we could have possibly included, you."

"Oh shush." Harry scolded. "What I want to know is where the souls of the Dursleys went, because I certainly never offered them up as an active or even passive sacrifice."

Bob frowned. "You know where they probably went."

"No, I have no idea where they went." Harry frustratingly said.

"Well," Bob replied sternly. "Not necessarily exactly where, but it's doubtful they're tied to the mortal world."

"Maybe doubtful, but not impossible." Harry retorted. "They could be... they could..."

"Maybe they split their soul into a horcrux and are still tied to the mortal world?"

Harry looked hopeful. "Yeah, maybe they did."

Bob reached over and smacked Harry in the head. "Harry, be serious."

Harry sighed and pouted. "I can't be Sirius, Dudley is."

Bob chuckled at Harry's painful truth. "Oh Harry. It may be possible the Dursleys are in a limbo, or maybe they got judged or moved on into some sort of hell or heaven, or who knows where. But they aren't mortal, and are in no further danger."

Harry frowned. "What are you saying?"

"I'm just pointing out, that you have the opportunity to get to know your parents and Godfather a whole lot better. Wherever the Dursleys are, they're probably not going anywhere for a while. So take your time. We can keep working on figuring out what happened and if the Dursleys can be returned to their bodies, maybe by sacrificing some more of Dudley's fat."

Harry nodded. "He could drop another hundred pounds of fat pretty easily."

"But in the interim," Bob grinned and redirected the conversation. "I cannot wait to meet the kooks that managed to spawn you."

Harry paled. "Oh Merlin, my parents are really here. Sirius is back." Harry sank back into his chair, tilted his head back, and covered his face with his arm. "What am I going to say to them?"

"You could always try: Mum, Dad, Sirius, I'd like you all to meet my gay lover, Bob." Bob suggested calmly.

Harry looked at Bob hopefully. "You'd think they'd be willing to accept us and our love?"

Bob flinched obviously, before clutching his chest. "Cripes, Harry. For a second there I completely believed you."

Harry smiled mischievously with a glimmer in his eyes. "It's the twinkle."

"No but seriously," Bob continued. "Just be honest with them and ask them the questions you always wanted to ask. Stuff like, 'Mum, Dad? What did I do to make you hate me so much as to abandon me all alone in this cold, cruel world?'"

Harry furrowed his brow. "That is a good question."

"And find out if you were breast-fed. I got money riding on that one."

Harry rolled his eyes. "You're sick, Bob. Very sick."

"I've never claimed otherwise." Bob admitted. "Now, if I were you, I'd be concerned about leaving three Marauders alone to plot and plan against you."

"Oh Merlin," Harry blanched. "I never considered the consequences of putting them all together. Maybe I should give them some time..."

“Oh no you don’t,” Bob yelled at him. “You’re not hiding from this one. I’m sure you’ve been taking your time talking to me or Albus just to avoid getting attached to your parents and then sending them back on their way. But I’m telling you, anything we try without some serious preparation, like months of double-checking and triple-checking, would be more likely to make it worse than better. No more stalling.”

“Fine,” Harry grumbled like a petulant child. “We’re going to need more information from my Mum about the shield, and all of them about the afterlife. Or I guess for them it might be the in-between life. Which would you think-”

“Stop stalling.” Bob interrupted. “I’ll be around for whenever you’re ready to experiment or I get to meet them. Now run along.”

Harry sighed as he stood up. He smiled weakly. “Thanks Bob.” He snapped his fingers and disappeared from the deep recesses of Azkaban.

He reappeared in the Chamber of Secrets and saw Dudley, Petunia, Vernon, and Moony sitting in a circle on their makeshift beds.

“His first year!” Vernon yelled. “He’s got to be the youngest in a century!”

“He was,” Moony answered.

Harry began to have some twisted flashback imagining Uncle Vernon caring for him like a father. It was not a very reassuring scene.

“Hi guys,” Harry called out, announcing his arrival.

“Oh Harry!” Petunia cried out and rushed towards Harry engulfing him in a hug. “I am so, so sorry. We had no idea.”

Harry was a bit shocked and looked at Dudley, who was snickering, and Moony who was shaking his head with a smile.

Vernon came lunging at Harry and Petunia and engulfed them both in a massive hug. Harry was a little uncomfortable realizing how much surface area Vernon's body covered with just his chunky hugging forearms. Vernon had tears in his eyes. "I can't imagine what it was like for you, Harry. I am so sorry you had to go through that. It's just not fair."

"Err... it wasn't so bad." Harry assured his parents with half-hearted pats on the back. "I'm here, aren't I?"

"Oh Harry," Petunia sniffled out. "I know you basically just met us, and don't even know us. But if you ever need to talk about what happened, please know that you always can, and we will always listen."

"Alright...err, thanks?" Harry replied uncertainly.

Vernon shook his head. "I just don't know how you turned out okay." He grabbed his wife and son in another hug.

Harry struggled for breath over Vernon's beefy shoulder. He mouthed and whispered towards Dudley and Moony, "What the hell did you tell them?"

Dudley giggled, while Moony just rubbed the bridge of his nose. "Padfoot just told them-"

"He told us a mother's worst nightmare!" Petunia exclaimed.

"He told us, son." Vernon said. "It doesn't need to be repeated. Just know that we know."

"Umm, I may need for it to be repeated, because there's a few different things that could ..." Harry paused and considered the diplomatic way to phrase this. "Potentially... upset... you."

"It gets worse?" Vernon paled. "How could it get any worse?"

Harry just turned to Remus. "Moony, what did Sirius tell them?"

Remus shook his head, smile still intact. "He's only told them who your Potions Professor was."

Harry deflated and rolled his eyes. "That's it? That's what upset you guys? Oh come on. Severus isn't that bad."

Vernon stepped back and saw his son was being honest. He quickly purpled in anger. "Greasy git broke my son!"

"I'm not broken," Harry frowned. "I just happen to know Severus better than you. And it's entirely possible he may have grown up in the twenty years since you last mocked him."

"Oooo," Dudley winced. "That's right. I forgot you saw that memory in the pensieve."

"What memory?" Petunia asked.

Harry sighed, not particularly looking forward to this conversation.

Dudley saw Harry wasn't going to answer and replied, "The one where you flipped Snivelly upside-down, and we all saw his—"

"Great Godric!" Vernon yelled. "That's not a sight anyone should have to see! Harry, I'm so sorry that happened. Honestly."

Harry wasn't sure how he felt about his dad's sympathy.

"If I'd known how stained and wretched his undies were..." Vernon shook his head. "I never would have done that in public."

Harry sighed while Dudley and Moony were giggling.

"James, shush!" Petunia scolded. "You're just upsetting Harry. Maybe Severus has changed, we wouldn't know."

"He hasn't!" Dudley exclaimed immediately.

Remus shrugged lightly.

"You can take the grease out of the git," Vernon sagely pointed out. "But Snivelly still sucks."

"Oh stop, James." Petunia said. "You weren't even this upset about Sirius going to Azkaban."

Harry raised an inquiring eyebrow at Moony.

Remus saw Harry's look and said, "We caught them up on what happened after they died, though they found it pretty hard to believe you survived a killing curse."

"Yeah!" Vernon exclaimed. "How'd you do that?"

Harry waved his hands. "Don't look at me. It was Mum."

Petunia sat there quietly. "I remembered references to an unbreakable shield of love. I never thought it would work but it wasn't like I had a whole slew of other options."

Moony smiled and shrugged. "In the past few years, I've begun to doubt that the shield did anything."

"Don't say that Moony!" Harry whined. "You're ruining the image of my mother."

Petunia retorted, "And me looking like my sister isn't?"

Harry turned to her and cringed. "Good point. Actually before we get too far into the lies these two will no doubt feed you," Harry said pointing to Dudley and Moony. "We should get you looking a bit more normal."

"Oh?" Dudley asked with a smile. "Are we here to stay?"

Harry shook his head with a frown. "No. I'm going to have to try and get the Dursleys back into their bodies, but as Bob reminded me, this isn't a pressing issue, and you all figure to be around for a little while."

"How long is a little while?" Vernon asked.

Harry shrugged. "Minimum, a couple months."

"Yes!" Vernon exclaimed victoriously.

Harry looked at Vernon asking for an explanation.

"Oh, right." Vernon said as he calmed. "Too bad for the Dursleys. Shame, really. Terrible thing."

Harry rolled his eyes. "No one's going to condemn you for being happy. I was just curious why you cheered over a couple months?"

Vernon smiled cheekily. "Why, my sweet Lils here owes me attendance at one full-

Petunia groaned. "You cannot honestly expect me to go through with that."

"A deal's a deal," Vernon demanded. "You can't back out now just because we've died."

Petunia smirked. "Fine. If you want to see this skinny, bony, pale wrinkled body in a skimpy cheerleaders outfit."

"Harry said he'd get us looking more normal." Vernon pointed out.

"A deal's a deal. You said no masks or anything that would hide my face."

"Err..." Harry interrupted. "Don't forget your son is here. Please let's leave the kinky talk till I've left the room."

"Oh, I'm sorry Harry." Petunia said. "I fear the impression we must be making, but it's not what you think."

"I got Lils to promise me to wear an official Puddlemere United Superfan Sisters of Yesteryear original outfit at the stadium for a full game, but the deal was only after Voldemort was gone." Vernon

pumped his fist victoriously. "And now my day has come!"

Harry briefly wondered if Hermione may have met her match at inappropriate acronym-making.

Petunia just sighed. "It's just a small bikini, not quite as daunting as my priority-free husband is making it out to be."

Dudley cried out. "Oh Merlin, Lils, stop! You're making me picture Petunia in a bikini. What... Why? Why? Do you hate me?"

Vernon looked like he was going to throw-up in his own mouth. "I think we've found a Muggle Unforgivable."

Petunia huffed a bit angrily. "Oh it bothers you that much!" She yelled at her husband and flashed her shirt up.

Vernon just started screaming and clutching his ears. He wrenched his eyes closed as tightly as possible.

Dudley had his arms up and crossed over his face while he kept his eyes clenched. "Moony! I got myself clear in time. Are you okay? Did you survive?"

Remus just mumbled quietly with his eyes glazed over.

"Moony?" Dudley asked. "You still with us?" Dudley cracked open his eyes and looked over his arm towards Remus. He saw the pain in the older man's eyes. "Moony down! We've got a Moony down! I need back up."

Remus took this opportunity to speak up. "There was... so much... she... didn't... I've seen werewolves with less chest hair."

Harry gave himself a second to focus, and pointed a finger at his temple. "Obliviate." He immediately turned towards his mother. "As I was saying, I'm going to go get some materials for a permanent polyjuice. This way you can at least appear to be in the correct bodies. Before you get to drink the polyjuice, we're going to need the

Dursleys to make an appearance or two and withdraw from their jobs and take a long vacation.”

Vernon had stopped screaming and was listening to Harry, while Dudley and Remus stared enviously at his memory charm skill.

“Umm... sure.” Petunia replied uncertainly.

“Excellent,” Harry smiled. “I’ll just be off then. You can ask Dobby to get you anything, and I shouldn’t be gone too long.” Harry stood up and started to walk off. “Oh wait, Mum?”

Petunia looked up expectantly, still a bit perturbed and delighted to be called that. “Yes?”

“I’m supposed to remind you to show that thing to Sirius again.” Harry winked at the horrified faces all the men were making, and snapped his fingers to pop away. “Toodles.” As Harry disappeared, he smirked at the most wicked, vindictive smile he had ever seen on his Aunt Petunia’s face.

CHAPTER THREE

“Crackhead!” Harry exclaimed. “Good to see you.”

“Mr. Potter, always a pleasure.” The goblin greeted with a bow.

Harry shook his head with a smile. “Why do I get the feeling you have some sort of sensor that alerts you whenever I enter Gringotts?”

Crackhead grinned wickedly. “It was a unanimously agreed upon necessary security procedure.”

Harry frowned. “It seems like I get that response a lot of places.”

Crackhead looked amused. “Just a coincidence, I’m sure.”

Harry just frowned at his goblin friend.

“Anything I can help you with today, Mr. Potter?” Crackhead inquired.

“Yeah,” Harry rolled his eyes. “You can call me Harry for once in public.”

Crackhead maintained his serious business attitude. “Of course Mr. Potter. You are hairy. Was there any other business I could help you with?”

Harry could only smile knowing he was doing his part to unite all the magic races under a singular banner of cheek. “Yes, err... actually. I have some questions regarding the handling of private accounts that I was hoping to discuss somewhere with discretion, as well as search for a couple things in my vaults.”

“Let’s go to my office.” Crackhead said succinctly and led him back to the familiar office.

As soon as Harry entered the office the door slammed shut, sealed, and melted into the wall.

Crackhead sat down tiredly at his chair behind his desk. "Do I even want to know, what you've done now?"

"What makes you think I've done something?" Harry indignantly exclaimed.

"Harry," Crackhead said with an amused condescending smile. "The three strongest goblin Seers in all of Europe were knocked unconscious by the magical explosion on Privet Drive. And today, you come in asking new things about your vaults?"

"Oops," Harry winced. "Sorry about that. It wasn't really my fault."

Crackhead snorted. "We're well aware how strong that explosion really was, and there's only one person who could have possibly contained that."

Harry just sat there with a guilty smile. Or maybe it was gas.

"Before we get too far, would you like to send off someone to retrieve the items from your vaults?"

"Oh," Harry remembered. "I just needed to locate some hairs or fingernails of my parents and godfather. I figured I'd check out some of their old clothes or brushes or combs, just something for a polyjuice."

"Ahh," Crackhead understood. "If this is a delicate emotional matter you would much rather tend to yourself, I understand. We carry tissues now."

Harry could only imagine the warmth and generosity of the goblins. He shook his head with a smile. "If you got someone to send, who can find them and save me the trip, that's great."

"Of course," Crackhead grinned. He pressed a button next to a large curved horn. He yelled some gobbledygook into it. Something else was yelled back, and Crackhead just smiled wider and yelled, "Griphook!"

Harry snickered remembering Griphook losing his temper at the table, and knowing he would be paying for his breach of etiquette. "Griphook still smarting over his flush?"

Crackhead nodded. "We're doing our part to remind him. At least until next Tuesday."

"Oh that's right," Harry realized. "My life has gotten a whole lot more complicated and I'm not sure if I'll be able to come then."

Crackhead raised an eyebrow. "Enough to alter poker night? This is a serious offense to goblin society."

"Oh shush," Harry retorted. "You guys are a lot harder to offend than you think. If I can, I'll be there to take your money as usual. Actually..." Harry pondered. "You want me to bring some fresh blood? That would make it easier on me."

Crackhead arched an eyebrow. "Wizards with a sufficient bankroll?"

Harry nodded. "Oh they'll have money to lose. I just need to figure out how we give it to them, or if it's theirs in the first place."

"Why would the money be theirs?" Crackhead asked curiously.

"Umm... err..." Harry paused.

"Oh dear."

"Why do people keep saying that?" Harry asked irritated.

"Harry," Crackhead explained. "Whether you have to pause to either decide if the truth is worth telling or to try to come up with some ridiculous lie, it is always cause to worry."

"Fine," Harry said. "But this is not to leave this room."

Crackhead nodded formally.

“Alright,” Harry agreed. “The money would be theirs, because the people I’m referring to are my Godfather and parents. And my inheritance came from them.”

“You need to polyjuice them to look like themselves?” Crackhead asked astonished.

“Yup.”

“It's not for hookers?”

Harry shook his head negatively.

“Oh dear.”

“Yup.” Harry agreed.

“Err...” Crackhead paused. “You do realize that they most definitely were dead?”

Harry nodded. “Mmm-hmm.”

“And apparently now are back to life?”

Harry felt like he was repeating himself as he nodded again.

“So apparently a magical explosion big enough to crack the planet in half is all it takes to revive the dead?” Crackhead inquired curiously.

Harry looked up at his goblin friend. “I’m not doing that again!”

Crackhead sighed. “I wish I could believe you.”

“Oh shush,” Harry grumbled. “It was a horrible accident that couldn’t be replicated if you wanted. And for the record I didn’t bring them back to life.”

Crackhead raised a curious eyebrow.

"I just seem to have put their souls into the bodies of my living relatives, that's all." Harry defended. "I didn't bring them 'back to life,' as you called it."

Crackhead looked doubtful. "Sounds like you brought them back to life to me."

"I didn't raise any dead!" Harry retorted. "I just accidentally swapped a few souls. Or something."

"So they were dead," Crackhead argued. "But now they're not."

"Not exactly."

"Yes, Harry," Crackhead concluded. "I'm sorry. But you brought them back to life."

"Why are we arguing this?" Harry irritably demanded.

Crackhead smiled sheepishly. "Because you brought people..." Crackhead paused considering his wording. "...back to life."

Harry didn't feel this childish dig deserved an intelligent answer.

Crackhead was entirely too amused at the moment. "So... err Harry?"

Harry pouted and looked away from the goblin.

Crackhead just rolled his eyes. "Are you going to be announcing that your parents are alive?"

Harry shook his head. "Hoping not to."

"Then why are you going to make them look like themselves?"

Harry shrugged. "I can't have them looking like the Dursleys. And what are people going to claim? That they're people who died six or twenty years ago?"

Crackhead nodded. "True. But if you're not publicly recognizing their existence, then why do you even need to worry about financial claims or stakes? You've got more than enough, and unless you expect any of them to publicly expose themselves and try to stake a claim on their share of your wealth, then there's nothing to worry about?"

"Oh," Harry acted scolded, wondering if even his subconscious was stalling. "Right."

"Not that they'd even have a case, since they wouldn't be able to dispute the fact that they died." Crackhead summarized. "We'll allow them normal access to their vaults, if that is your wish."

Harry nodded at Crackhead and was about to ask a question when they were interrupted by Griphook buzzing to be let in. The door reappeared and he walked in carrying a few things. He nodded to Crackhead and gave Harry the evil eye.

"Griphook!" Harry cheered. "How are you doing?"

Griphook just grumbled a few derogatory things in Gobbledygook that made Crackhead chuckle.

Harry playfully frowned. "You can't be still upset about that Griphook."

"You cheated." He snapped at Harry.

"I did no such thing," Harry denied. "Goodness knows, you make me prove it often enough."

"I still say you cheated." He grumbled.

Harry rolled his eyes and let them twinkle at Crackhead. "So Griphook, did you find something I can use?"

Griphook grumbled. "I've got an old cloak from Mr. Black's former personal vault. There were several human hairs as well as canine ones."

Harry nodded. "Yup, that's him."

“Not all of the canine ones are male.” Griphook pointed out. “And I found several combs and brushes in your parents’ old personal vault, as well as their wands.”

“Perfect!” Harry exclaimed. “I didn’t even think about getting those.”

“Oh dear,” Griphook said as he turned to Crackhead. “Do I even want to know?”

Crackhead just laughed out loud in answer to Griphook’s question.

“Oh dear,” Griphook reiterated. “Why do I get the feeling there’s going to be goblin war or two before Mr. Potter is done?”

“Hey!” Harry demanded. “Don’t blame me because you can’t lay down a flush!”

This apparently was the right thing to say as Griphook turned a little pink and set the stuff down as he made his way out of Crackhead’s office. He angrily stomped away slamming his foot down with each step. Just as he walked out the door, Griphook quickly stuck his head back in the room with an eager smile. “We’re still on for Tuesday, right?”

Crackhead nodded. “We may even have some fresh wizard blood.”

Griphook growled. “Do they cheat?”

Crackhead snickered. “Oh yes. Death, in fact.”

Griphook paled and looked back at Harry. “Oh dear.” His head snapped back and the door quickly shut and disappeared.

Harry sighed and looked back at Crackhead. “If they come, can I count on the guys’ discretion for poker night? Or should they be in disguise?”

Crackhead shook his head. "Harry, you know the entire goblin nation will keep your secrets. We're a far more intelligent race than you wizards."

"Why's that?"

"I could try to explain it to you, but I'm not sure your feeble wizard mind is up to the task of comprehending it." Crackhead haughtily replied.

"Not that," Harry shook his head. "I wouldn't argue that you're more intelligent. I was asking, why the entire goblin nation would keep my secrets?"

Crackhead smiled. "Sometimes your modesty does you harm, Harry."

Harry looked at Crackhead, asking for more.

"Alright, Harry, there are three distinctly different forms of power the goblins respect: political power, financial power, and magical power." Crackhead explained. "Often the goblins play those three, and their figureheads, against each other to the goblins' benefit. When all three are the same person, then that's best kind of friend to have."

Harry saw the logic in that, though he felt his influence might be a bit overstated.

"And it becomes in the goblins' best interests to keep you as happy and stable as we can." Crackhead paused. "Even if it means the occasional unmarked hidden vault we have to keep your problems in."

Harry was beginning to wonder about his life, when so many of his friends assume he has a body he needs to hide. "I may have a feeble wizard mind, but I know it's not worth arguing this with you. Thanks for your help, Crackhead." Harry said as he stood up.

"Any time, Harry." Crackhead grinned. "My job's biggest responsibility here is to keep you happy."

Harry grinned and wondered if he could get a job like that.

Crackhead frowned. "And figure out how you're cheating too."

Harry shook his head. "Mind if I leave straight from here?"

"No apparating!" Crackhead sternly ordered. "You can pop though."

"I said I was sorry," Harry stated though he didn't look much like he meant it. "See you Tuesday. I'll let you know how many are coming with me." A snap of his fingers and he disappeared. Less than a second later, he reappeared with a soft pop. "Oh!" Harry smiled as he pointed to the chair where his parents' and godfathers' stuff was. "I forgot my bag." With an evil smile, Harry grabbed the bag and silently apparated away from Gringotts intentionally not using his house elf abilities.

Crackhead yelled and threw a mug at the wall, as all the sirens started blaring and the bank went into lockdown. "I knew I shouldn't have told him the goblins will support him." If Harry had stuck around, he would have recognized a few of the Gobbledygook swear words he had been learning.

"Harry!" Dudley yelled. "Where have you been?"

"Getting stuff for polyjuice, why? What's going on?"

"Look at my ass!" Dudley yelled dropping trough and letting fly a full moon over Moony's giggling back.

"Ahhhh!" Harry screamed at the sight of Dudley's purpled mangled left cheek. "Oh... right."

Dudley just looked at Harry incredulously. "You knew this was happening?"

"Well," Harry shrugged. "Sort of. I mean that's where Dudley stunned himself, and that's where the potion was injected, so some minor bruising is expected."

"Minor bruising?" Remus asked with a smile.

Vernon smiled. "You know if you stare at it for ten seconds you can actually watch it grow."

"Ooooh," Harry winced. "That's not good. That means there's some potion still in there, and it's probably mutated a bit."

"Good God, son!" Vernon exclaimed. "Us Potters don't do things by half, do we?"

"Good godson?" Dudley asked Vernon.

Harry decided he should take control of the immediate situation before Vernon and Dudley confused each other more. "Sirius! We need to neutralize the potion before it eats away too much flesh."

"Yeah we do!" Dudley vehemently agreed.

"Err, there's two ways to do this," Harry offered. "A scary way with a short intense bit of pain, or a less scary way but with more drawn out pain."

"I'll take scary," Dudley chose.

"Here drink this," Harry offered him a clear vial.

Dudley downed it immediately. "Hmm, that didn't taste too bad. Kind of pepperminty. What was it?"

"Basilisk Venom."

Dudley's eyes bulged out as he wrapped his hands around his throat, and tried to gag himself.

"Err, Harry, sweetie?" Petunia gently asked. "I'm not sure how much has changed, but isn't Basilisk Venom, pretty much... fatal?"

Harry nodded, while Dudley's eyes just bulged out. "But we need to get one of the two elements to overpower the other. And this will just

hurt a lot for a few seconds, until it knocks him unconscious and kills him slowly.”

Dudley just began screaming out loud, and running his hands all over the burning feeling in his body. His eyes rolled back up into his head and he fell to the ground unconscious.

“See that wasn’t so bad,” Harry cheerfully stated.

Vernon looked at his son, and then wife and Moony. “Umm Moony? Should we be worried?”

Remus shrugged. “Harry knows what he’s doing, but yes, you should be very worried.”

“Oh hush,” Harry scolded as he levitated Dudley’s body up to a bed. Harry rolled him over, and looked at Vernon, Petunia, and Remus. He pulled Dudley’s pants down out of the way, and his shirt up a bit, looking at the mangled flesh that was quickly blackening. “Any volunteers to rub some stuff into his ass?”

A few skeptical looks and Harry grumbled. “Fine.” He poured a cream colored liquid from the vial all over Dudley’s body, rubbing it into the diseased looking area. Immediately the blackened bruised color was fading away, and Dudley’s pale complexion seemed to get a bit pinker.

Vernon, Petunia, and Remus were just watching Harry knead the flesh, with barely a flinch. “Umm, Harry? What are you doing, anyway?”

“Oh, this?” Harry asked, apparently unsure what they were questioning. “I’m just working in the Phoenix Tears, to counter the Basilisk Venom that’s infected the mutated potion.”

“Is uh...” Petunia looked around confused. “Is that wise?”

Harry nodded. “Yup, we needed both of these together in the potion, but they can’t be combined on their own beforehand, or they’ll react to each other and not the Dementor Blood. He could have drank the

Phoenix Tears, but then we'd need to rub in the Basilisk Venom, and it's not as simple, as to make it seep through, requires it burning the skin a bit."

"Oh." Petunia agreed, not really following all of that.

Vernon interrupted. "Err, I think your mother was more concerned about you massaging Dudley's ass and kind of looking like you enjoy it."

Petunia slapped Vernon's arm. "James! I didn't mean it like that."

Harry had completely stopped and looked down at what he was doing. He had been hiding in his special place, distancing himself from the actions and ministrations he was forced to do. But now he had to face the cruel reality of what his hands were doing. His eyes quickly started to water, and he could taste the bile in the back of his throat.

Vernon let out a sigh of relief. "Thanks Harry. You've certainly made me feel better."

Petunia smiled lightly and looked as if a small weight had been lifted as well.

A groggy and sore Dudley stirred a bit at the sudden end to the soothing caress his body had relaxed into in its slumber. "Ohhhh, man that feels better." Dudley's eyes snapped open and he turned to look at a horrified Harry. "You made me drink Basilisk Venom, you dolt!"

"I merely gave it to you." Harry insisted. "You're the one who drank it."

Dudley looked crushed. "Harry," he said quietly, sounding legitimately upset and tired. "Do you really need to kill me again? Wasn't once enough?"

Harry just paled and took a frightened step back. "I... I..." He looked towards his parents and Moony. "I'm sorry, Sirius. I... don't know what to say."

“Harry,” Remus interrupted with a shake of his head. “Padfoot just likes to make jokes about people’s emotions in order to hide his own. He doesn’t blame you for his death.”

Harry looked up at Remus hopefully. He had tears in his eyes, “He... he... doesn’t? Then- then why?” Harry turned to Dudley with a heartbroken expression. “Why would you say something like that? Do you know how many nightmares I’ve had... How many times I ask myself...” Harry just looked away softly sobbing.

Dudley went pale. “Oh Harry. Crap. I didn’t mean that... You know that... I... I...”

“Sirius,” Remus interrupted exhaustedly. “Harry’s just like you that way.”

Dudley stopped looking worried and sat up straighter. “You sly dog, you!” Dudley said with a smile towards Harry.

Harry smiled brightly at Dudley and stood up proudly. “I’ve been called a clever bitch many times before.”

Dudley just smiled brightly, pride shining in his eye. “God, it’s great to see you.”

Harry looked happily at Dudley. “You too, Si- Sirius.” Harry seemed to be unable to hold back his emotions anymore and started sniffing in happiness. “I mean I never thought...”

Dudley stood up proudly and opened his arms. He gently said, “Come here, my godson.”

Harry looked towards Dudley with tears running down his face. They took two steps towards each other, before both couldn’t take it anymore and started cracking up in loud laughter.

Moony just sighed to himself, while Petunia hurriedly wiped her eyes. “You two are completely heartless, you know that?”

Dudley looked towards Vernon, “We got her?”

Vernon nodded with a smile. "Oh yeah. Someone turned the knob on her waterworks, because it was more than just a couple stragglers."

Petunia just huffed, while Harry and Dudley high-fived each other in a movement that meant more than any inappropriate show of emotion.

Remus just smiled and felt comfort that not even Death could change his friends. "So what's the plan, now?"

"Now?" Harry repeated. "Now, I think we should take it easy and have the rest of the night in, catching up. Tomorrow you three will make a few public appearances, take leaves of absence at the Dursleys' jobs and appear to go a long vacation. Once that's done, I'll have the polyjuice ready and you all can look like... you."

"So you're not going to run away and hide from us anymore?" Petunia asked in a way only a stern mother could.

Harry gulped. "Err... I'll try not to?"

Dudley snickered. "I think you've put this off long enough."

Harry nodded, and waved a hand creating three couches arranged around a roaring fireplace. "Yeah, alright. I knew I'd be having this conversation some day, I just thought I could put it off until after I was dead."

Petunia and Vernon gasped at the impressive bit of magic Harry did with just a wave of his hand. Remus chuckled. "Maybe someone's trying to get you to grow up."

Harry frowned and stared up into the ceiling. "Maybe someone needs to mind their own business."

Remus all out laughed now. "I think you might be supporting some of the rumors about you there, Harry. Talking to your other Dad?"

Harry rolled his eyes while Vernon perked right up. "What other Dad?"

Harry shrugged. "God?"

Vernon looked to his wife who was looking right back at him curiously. "Err... what?"

Remus chuckled. "There are a few unsubstantiated rumors these days about our Harry, here. One of the more popular ones is that he's the Favorite Son of God."

Dudley barked out a laugh.

Moony nodded. "More popular than Jesus."

Vernon pumped his fist. "Yes!"

Petunia just looked at her husband and shook her head. "Could we get a little more background here before we jump into unsubstantiated rumors?"

"Yes, please," Harry agreed. "What would you like to know?"

"Everything!" Vernon cheered.

Harry looked at Dudley and Moony. "Umm... how about you ask questions, and I'll answer what I can?"

Remus narrowed his eyes. "Don't you lie to your mother."

Harry raised a challenging eyebrow. "Lie? Why would I ever lie? I learned how to tell the truth from Albus."

Dudley narrowed his eyes. "Same thing."

"I only meant, I'm not going to violate anyone's secrets that aren't mine to tell." Harry explained. "But this is learning time for me too. I want you three to answer just as much." Harry said pointing to the Dursleys.

"Hey what about me?" Moony exclaimed.

"You can play too, Moony," Harry agreed. "But you I know." Harry shrugged. "And I'm not trying to figure out how to rip the soul out of the body you currently inhabit."

"Oh, right." Remus sat down appeased.

Petunia butted in. "Well, I want to hear about you to, Remus."

Vernon nodded. "Well, we already know you play Quidditch, so what's the next most important thing?"

Petunia smiled happily. "Are you seeing anyone?"

Harry sighed and sank into his chair, while Remus just laughed.

Dudley seemed to like this response. "Nice one Lils, I think you hit a gusher already."

Harry paused and finally decided to say, "No one seriously," He turned to Dudley, "Shut it!" before continuing, "But I am casually dating several girls. None at the point where I need to introduce them to my parents yet, though I'm sure I will now."

Dudley looked to Remus. "Anyone I know?"

Moony smiled, and stuck out his hand to count off on his fingers. "Well, the confirmed dates that have made the paper include Miss Ginny Weasley, your cousin's daughter Nymphadora-

"Go Harry!" Dudley cheered imagining Tonks with him.

Remus continued on while Petunia's eyes were wide. "Let's see there was Luna Lovegood, the Patil twins-

Vernon's eyes widened as he asked, "Twins?"

Remus smiled and nodded back. "Yes both, at the same time."

"Nice." Vernon congratulated as his wife swatted him in the head.

Remus seemed to be building up steam. "And then there was-"

"I think," Harry interrupted loudly. "That they get the point, Moony. Thank you."

"Harry?" Petunia asked curiously. "Are you a manslut?"

Harry looked at Petunia. "All the people I've been seeing know it's casual and I'm seeing other people. Why? Would it bother you if I was?"

Petunia looked at her way too proud husband. "I just want you to be happy."

Harry smiled widely, "Oh I'm definitely that. No worries there."

"Nice." Vernon congratulated and ducked a swat that never came. He looked a bit stupid doing it too.

"And that wasn't a very fair question," Harry pointed out. "You two are married, and dead. Sirius, you're just dead. And Moony, you're well... you're... crud, how long has it been since you got laid?"

Remus just blushed and looked towards Petunia for help. Petunia just shrugged. "You look like you could use it, Remus."

"No, I'm not seeing anyone. Next question, please." Remus said, avoiding looking at anyone.

"What do you do?" Vernon asked Harry.

"What don't I do, is a better question. I mean I can juggle, I can whistle with my pinkies, I can pat my head, rub my stomach and scratch my-"

"Harry!" Remus interrupted. "Your job. I think they're asking what your job is."

“Oh... that.” Harry said. “Err, well I’m involved in a research project which still has some testing it appears.”

“I’d say so,” Dudley helpfully pointed out.

“And I’m invested in several businesses and...” Harry drifted off thinking what does he do to the pass the time.

“Harry,” Remus said tiredly.

“What?” Harry asked. “What am I forgetting?”

Before Moony could even respond, the floor beneath the couch Harry was on rippled and sucked him halfway in.

“Oh right!” Harry said from his now captive state. “Here. Forgot about here. I’m the DADA professor and Head of Hufflepuff House though I was thinking of taking a year off.”

“Hufflepuff?” Vernon exclaimed. “Our son’s a puffer?”

Harry rolled his eyes as Hogwarts pushed him back up on solid ground. “No, I was in Gryffindor.”

“Oh thank Godric,” Vernon sagged in relief.

“But the Sorting Hat wanted to put me in Slytherin.”

Vernon just gasped.

“Not because of all the muggle hating and murdering, but because I’m a Parselmouth.”

“Cool!” Vernon exclaimed. “Wait... I thought Parseltongue was only in Slytherin’s descendents?”

Harry nodded.

Vernon turned to Petunia. “Lily you naughty Dark Witch, you!”

“James, honey,” Petunia scolded. “We did heritage potions. I’m all muggleborn.”

“Oh right.” Vernon said confusedly before blustering in anger. “You harlot! You cheated on me with a Slytherin! How dare you!”

Petunia just sighed. “This wasn’t how I wanted you to find out... but...”

Vernon was rapidly turning purple, oblivious to the other guys’ quiet snickering.

Petunia just began, “Severus was a kind and gentle lover...”

“Ahhhhhh!” Vernon’s tongue seemed to swell up and he was having trouble breathing.

Petunia finally jumped up. “I give. I can’t even pretend that. I feel dirty. And sick. Oh god...”

Dobby appeared and handed her a glass of water. He bowed deeply, “It was valiant effort, and you even got your husband a nice throbbing purple color.”

“Err... thank you,” Petunia said to the odd pirate looking elf who quickly disappeared.

Vernon settled himself. “You... you didn’t sleep with Sn-”

“Don’t say it!” Petunia said with a shudder. “Just... don’t make me think it ever again.”

Vernon calmed himself and was clutching his heart. “I think this fat body might not survive something like that again. Oh sweet Mother of Gryffindor.” After helping himself to some of Petunia’s water, Vernon continued. “So who was the Slytherin you slept with?”

Petunia just looked at her husband worriedly.

Dudley chuckled. "Must have been your evil twin, considering where Harry got his looks."

Harry shook his head. "I wasn't born a Parseltongue. I got a few of Voldemort's powers when I was baby and reflected the killing curse back on him."

"Ohhhh," Vernon said realizing his wife's fidelity wasn't quite as suspect as he had feared.

"And as for Hufflepuff, it's because there are no Hufflepuff alumni on staff anymore, and Albus wants me to stay on in the same job, so he forced me to become more attached to the kids."

Dudley chuckled. "Yeah, he can be about as subtle as a bulldozer sometimes."

"Bulldozer, Sirius," Petunia suggested.

"That too," Dudley agreed.

"So..." Harry waited expectantly for someone else to jump in. "Hello?"

"Yes?" Dudley asked with an ignorant smile.

"Your guys' turn," Harry explained with a look. "What do you do?"

Petunia looked at her husband and Dudley. "Err, Harry sweetie. We're dead."

Harry rolled his eyes. "Yes, mum. Thanks for the pleasant reminder. But what did you do before you died. No one's ever told me." He gave a pointed look towards Remus.

Moony just raised his hands in defense. "You never asked."

Vernon seemed to be thinking. "Err, well... my parents died and left me a lot of money so I pretty much just hung around Lils."

Petunia smiled. "Once you were on the way, I decided I wanted a large family. And figured I'd come up with a career once you were all old enough to take care of yourselves."

Harry smiled lightly before thinking out loud. "I was like fifteen months old when you died. Were you pregnant with a brother or sister?"

"Err..." Petunia winced a bit and added. "Well, when I made that decision about the large family, that was before I'd gone through labor with you. After that, it was sort of a lengthy reevaluation-of-the-priorities period."

"You know," Vernon added. "Come to think of it, I was preparing myself to go into politics."

Harry made a pained face, trying not to upset his father. "Politics? Really?"

Vernon had a genuine smile on his face. "Yeah, really."

Harry just smiled at Vernon while inside he kept debating whether he was a bad person for thinking 'Thank you, Voldemort', or a bad person for being grateful his dad was dead rather than a politician.

"Sirius?" Harry asked. "You don't seem the sort of person even I would vote for. What about you?"

Dudley shrugged. "I had money too, if I wanted it, but I liked Moony and Prongs' couches as much as any family manors. I was planning on taking Busty on a long road trip once Voldemort was dealt with, or I had a reason to."

"Busty?" Harry asked looking towards Remus for translation.

Moony nodded and said, "His motorcycle."

"You named her Busty?" Harry asked incredulously. "That so utterly and completely fits her."

"I know!" Dudley yelled back happily. He frowned a little. "I don't understand it at all."

Harry shook his head. "I could never figure it out either, but something about her always seemed... you're right. Busty. It certainly makes more sense now why I felt compelled to name her..." Harry only now realized he was talking to people out loud. "Nevermind."

"No!" Remus scolded. "Bad! No reason to hide this."

Harry looked at Dudley's hopeful face, and Petunia and Vernon's curious nods.

"I named her..." Harry stopped to clear his throat. "I named her Rosmerta." And before Harry could even stop it he blushed darkly and paled rapidly as he quickly looked away.

Dudley just laughed out loud. "Oh Rosie!"

Petunia looked at her son and realized, "I don't even want to know."

Dudley snickered, "Like father, like son."

"What?" Petunia screeched and whipped towards her husband.

"Cheese it, Padfoot. Don't make stuff up just to get me into trouble." Vernon turned to his wife, and cleared his throat. He spoke clearly, in a deeper, professional sounding voice. "I had nothing to do with anything. Ever."

"Me neither!" Harry insisted.

"Thank you, Harry." Vernon accepted. "See, I was with Harry. We're each others' alibis."

Harry winced. "Oh man, you would have made a real good politician too."

Vernon puffed up a bit. "Thank you, son."

“That wasn’t a compliment,” Harry quipped. “Dad.”

Dudley was pointing and laughing at the embarrassed look on Vernon’s face. He turned back to Harry and asked with a smile, “So how’s old Busty, holding up? Or Rosie, if you prefer.”

“I’m sorry, Sirius.” Harry winced. “I had to crash that motorcycle.”

“What?” Dudley looked heartbroken. “Can’t you fix her?”

“Not exactly,” Harry explained. “But we were on a road trip through California, so she went out the way she wanted.”

Dudley frowned and sighed. “And how did she want to?”

“Oh...” Harry paused remembering. “Err, she sort of triggered off the explosion to close the fiery gate that went straight to hell.”

Remus raised an eyebrow not having heard about this one.

“Though,” Harry added with a smile. “She very well could have survived, with some of the charms on her, but she’d still be in hell. So if you make it there, you two could reunite.”

Dudley looked up from his hands. “You put her in hell? Sweet and sour little Busty? What did she ever do to you?”

Harry was speechless. He stammered a couple of words out and found himself pinned against the wall by an angry Dudley screaming in his face. “What did she ever do to you!”

“I’m sorry, Sirius.” Harry sniffled. “I’m just so sorry.” He collapsed to the floor and curled into a fetal position.

Petunia was watching the confrontation get more and more heated and she felt an urge to run out and help her son. Her real live, genuine son. She took two steps towards her crying, sobbing son on the floor when Dudley continued.

"You should be sorry," Dudley screamed as he began kicking Harry in the ribs. "I'll show you sorry, you little bitch!"

Harry apparently couldn't take it anymore and burst out laughing, bringing Dudley into giggles as well.

"You two are sick. Seriously, you should look up a therapist." Petunia just pretended her eyes weren't glassy and turned away.

"Damn," Dudley cursed and grinned. "I thought we'd had a couple of tears at least."

Harry had a look of satisfaction. "We were close. I could tell. If you hadn't started kicking me..." He ended in a chuckle.

"You're getting me a new bike, right?" Dudley asked with a smirk.

Harry rolled his eyes. "Yes, we'll get you a new bike. Maybe I should get a new bike too. You think we could get Moony to take a bike?"

Dudley looked over at a smiling Remus. "Naw, Moony's too stuffed up. He always said it was too dangerous and he wanted to live a long life."

"That true, Moony?" Harry asked with an evil grin.

"Padfoot," Remus began with a smile. "I think I know Meg here better than you do. And I think I've waited too long to get a bike."

"Meg?" Dudley asked with a grin.

Harry rolled his eyes and sealed his lips.

Remus grinned brightly. "It's a shortened version of our young Mr. Potter's Marauder nickname."

"You got christened?" Dudley asked Harry with glee. "So what's Meg short for?"

CHAPTER FOUR

“Meg?” Vernon asked appalled at the nickname. “Is your animagus form a ten year old girl with pigtails or something?”

“Meg,” Remus explained with a smug grin, “is short for Omega.”

“Omega?” Petunia repeated. “My son’s nickname is ‘The end’?”

Harry just sighed.

“Yup,” Moony chuckled. “Because I’m pretty sure, eventually, he’s going to kill us all.”

“I’m not that bad,” Harry feebly argued. Sadly Harry had long ago accepted this as an unavoidable risk of his existence.

“What the hell sort of animagus form would get you called ‘The end’?” Dudley asked incredulously. “Some sort of baboon with the big fleshy pink... end?”

Harry winked at Moony quickly and gasped. “How’d you know? That’s amazing!” Harry jumped up with a pop and turned in a large baboon, with an exceptional hairless throbbing posterior. He ran towards Dudley and jumped into his arms, ass first.

“Aieeee!” Dudley screamed before calming. “Wow. That is warm.”

“Our son’s personality is most similar to... a monkey’s?” Petunia asked while Dudley kept wiping his hands. “Omega, the baboon? That’s the best you could come up with Remus?”

Vernon looked thoughtful. “I always wondered what it’d be like to fling poo without getting in trouble for it.”

Harry popped back into his normal form and Dudley fell to the floor under the sudden change in weight with a loud “oof.”

“Well, Dad,” Harry said. “It’s not as fun as it looks. And you have to clean your fingernails constantly, or you’ll never hear the end of a certain brand of rumor.”

Vernon was pensive. “I suppose it is the flinging more than the poo, but together it seems so much more.”

Remus grinned. “And I didn’t name him Omega because he’s not a baboon.”

“Err, Moony,” Dudley said still trapped underneath a smiling Harry. “I’m pretty sure he is a baboon.”

“No, Padfoot,” Moony corrected. “Harry here hasn’t exactly found a form and stuck with it. He just sort of turns into whatever he feels up to.”

“Well, maybe no animagus form,” Dudley continued. “But that doesn’t mean he’s not a baboon.”

“Oi!” a highly insulted Harry grinned at the pinned man below him. “You might want to be a little more respectful or I may turn into an elephant while I’m sitting here.”

Harry noticed Petunia yawning and spoke up. “You guys should get some more rest, you look beat. How about we continue this conversation in the morning before heading towards Privet Drive?”

“Or what remains of it,” Remus clarified.

“That too,” Harry added with a smile. Dudley, Vernon, and Petunia put up little protest assuring Remus and Harry they really were quite exhausted. A few hand motions and snaps of fingers and the couches turned in overly large comfortable beds. Harry and Remus walked away from the freaks of nature that were Harry’s family in the bodies of Harry’s relatives.

Remus just quietly chuckled at Harry. “Damn, Potter. Damn.”

Harry rolled his eyes. "I know." He sighed and was quietly reflecting on the day. "Oh, Moony. You want to stay here too, or you want me to take you home?"

"You mind if I stay? I don't want to intrude," Remus said with puppy dog eyes.

"No! Please stay." Harry pleaded. "I'm not sure how well I trust those three left to their own devices."

"You going somewhere?" Remus asked.

Harry shook his head sadly. "No. But so far it looks like I've ripped out the souls of the Dursleys and sort of brought my parents and Sirius back. And that was an accident when I was in a good mood. Right now, I'm contemplating the benefits of a nervous breakdown."

Moony chuckled. "Well let's try and avoid any more accidents then. And yes I will be here for whatever you need from me. Even babysitting people who died twenty years ago." Remus looked at the sleeping Dursleys happily baffled. "There a floo around here so I can let the office know that I'm taking an indefinite leave of absence?"

Harry rolled his eyes. "The office. Right. The fireplace going over there can be used."

Remus frowned. "Harry, you just conjured that a few hours ago."

"Yeah?" Harry asked.

"It hasn't been set up for the floo system! It's not even a real fireplace!" Remus insisted.

Harry smirked. "You doubt me?"

"No, but you're still a Marauder and probably want me to stick my head in fire."

Harry shook his head. "I'm going to sleep, Moony. It'll work just fine, but if you'd like I can conjure you another one."

Remus shook his head. "Night, Meg."

"Night, Moony." Harry said as he went back towards his own sleeping quarters.

It was an extremely cautious twenty-five minutes later before Moony finally finished his ten second floo call, cursing Harry for not doing anything to him. Remus had certainly walked right into that one.

Remus woke up to a heated argument. He cracked his eyes open and nearly gasped to realize that yes, he was in fact in the Chamber of Secrets, and this wasn't another accidental hallucinogenic experience. He looked over and saw an obscuring charm, and more than likely silencing charm was around the bed that had contained Petunia and Vernon, also known as, Prongs and Lils. He certainly remembered Prongs' superhuman snoring power, and appreciated the silencing charm. Moony slowly sat up and began paying attention to what Harry and Dudley's voices were arguing about.

"You should have told me!" Harry insisted.

"I didn't think it would matter," Dudley defended. "And you know you could have asked."

"Didn't matter? They are evil." Harry yelled. "They will corrupt you from the inside."

"They're not that bad," Dudley stated. "Albus uses them all the time."

"You're using Albus as an example?" Harry was incredulous. "The man is completely nutters! Probably because of them."

"For Merlin's sake, Harry." Dudley sighed. "They are not inherently evil. It's all about intent."

"You honestly believe that? After everything you've seen? And grew up with?"

Dudley seemed a bit hesitant. "Yes... yes I do. If you're intentions are good and pure, then it's perfectly acceptable."

“No Sirius,” Harry sighed. “You’re talking about an extremely slippery slope that always ends up twisting a person’s soul. Turning them into something they should never be. Something that eventually needs to be put down before it festers and spreads.”

Remus was smirking at the audacity and hypocrisy of Harry and decided to make his presence known. “Harry, I know for a fact you use Dark Arts all the time.”

Dudley and Harry turned to Remus. Harry furrowed his brow. “Morning Moony. And that’s an interesting point but not exactly relevant.”

Dudley was confused. “Yeah, Moony, what brought this up?”

Remus frowned. “Err... what are you guys talking about?”

Dudley rolled his eyes and sat down.

Harry’s eyes flared and he spit out, “Politics.”

Moony frowned briefly before breaking into loud laughter.

“Thank you, Mr. Moony,” Dudley grinned. “That’s exactly my point.”

Harry frowned. “Oh come on Sirius. You grew up with a Dark family. You know what it’s like. You should have told me my Dad had aspirations to go into politics!”

“Well he died before it ever became an issue,” Dudley explained.

Harry sighed. “I always figured my Dad was a nice guy. I guess you never can tell.”

Moony sat down next to Dudley. “Harry, your dad was a nice guy. Err, is a nice guy. And I rarely say this, but Padfoot’s right. Politicians aren’t all evil. Most of them start into it with high hopes for changing the world and ideals to strive for.”

“Until politics blackens their soul,” Harry agreed. “I know this. Everyone knows this. And anyone still wanting to blacken their soul by getting into politics is evil.”

Dudley was about to retort, when Remus put his hand on the man to stop him. Dudley looked back and saw Petunia getting up.

Petunia walked over and kissed Harry on the top of his head. “Morning, Harry.”

Harry had a weak smile. “Err, good morning... Mum.”

Petunia tried not to look too upset. “Is it that difficult for you to say? You don’t have to, of course...”

“No,” Harry shook his head. “It’s not difficult to say. It just feels wrong to be saying this to Aunt Petunia. Pretty much the exact anti-mom, if I have one.”

Petunia winced. “She treated you that crappy? I knew she was a vindictive bitch but you are... or were a baby.”

Harry shrugged, “I’m alive, relatively well-adjusted-”

Remus had to look away as he snorted so hard, mucus came shooting out his nose.

Harry ignored Remus and continued, “It could have been a lot worse. I prefer not to think about it. But if you and Dad want me to go through the pain and emotional trauma of reliving it and telling you about it, I will.”

Petunia raised a hand. “No, no. I don’t want to make things more difficult for you. Just being here at all is a treat for us, no matter how... absurd it has been. And besides sweetie, you got some accidental revenge putting me into her skinny, frail body, right?” Petunia was smiling brightly now.

Harry just looked at his Aunt Petunia’s body and chuckled weakly. “Right.”

Remus just laughed out loud. "Oh man I'm glad you and Prongs are here, Lils. I don't think I could have ever properly described you, had Harry ever bothered to ask me."

Petunia smiled. "I suppose sexy, vivacious, brilliant, and insatiable would be close, but you're right. There really aren't words up to the task."

Harry made a pained face. "I'm not sure if it's the idea of Aunt Petunia's body being called sexy or the idea of my mum as sexy, but something's not right about that."

Vernon groggily made his way over and helped himself to the breakfast they were all munching on. "Well she is damn sexy, I assure you. Though I would prefer you find out yourself and we start looking more how we feel."

Remus smiled. "Really? So you don't feel exhausted and tired? Great! Let's go now, then."

Vernon groaned while Dudley and Harry stood up. Vernon nodded reluctantly. "Yeah, let's go. It's a workout carrying all this fat around. I miss having a neck."

Harry snapped his fingers and made all three Dursley outfits look the same as what they wore yesterday. Remus already looked muggle enough, so Harry said, "Everyone put a hand on me and I'll take us to Privet Drive."

The odd group reappeared in the bushes of a familiar house on Wisteria Walk. Harry explained, "I realized I wasn't sure where would even be safe on Privet Drive, so I popped us here. At least Mrs. Figg will be blaming Dudley for crushing her roses."

Dudley looked down. "Oh... sorry."

Vernon asked Harry, "So what exactly are we doing here?"

Harry smiled and was explaining as he led them down the street. "Proving to the neighbors you're alive, preparing to go on vacation, returning to the scene of the crime, take your pick."

Petunia asked, "So who should we be talking to? And who are these people?"

Harry shrugged. "Just wave, say hi, act Dursley-ish."

"Good morning, my fellow muggles," Vernon said loudly and proudly.

"Prongs," Dudley said with a sigh. "Let's avoid the term muggles, okay?"

"Oh! Right." Vernon said as he went back to shaking his fat head. "Rabble rubble rubble rubble."

Petunia tapped Harry on the shoulder. "How's this?" She proceeded to make a horrified pained face as she gasped. She narrowed her eyes and quietly hissed. "I hate you! Behave."

Harry raised an eyebrow. "Spot on."

Petunia beamed at the praise and thought she could pull off a fair impression of her sister.

Dudley saw Vernon and Petunia doing their part and tried to join in. "Derr..." He looked over at Moony. "Der... der... der."

Remus sighed. "Dudley," he stated pointedly. "You've turned into a pretty nice guy lately. Not a blabbering vegetable."

"Right," Dudley said with a nod. "Oink?"

Harry shook his head. "You know this may not work, but it is kind of fun."

"Just keep moving and acting Dursley-ish," Remus pleaded as they turned the corner towards Privet Drive. "Holy crap."

“Great Merlin!” Petunia exclaimed.

“Oh my Godric!” Vernon gulped.

Dudley just looked towards where Number Four Privet Drive used to be and started laughing.

Harry was in shock. Where the all too normal house should have been, was now nothing more than blackened scorched wasteland around a sinkhole. It didn’t appear as though grass would even grow in the area. “Why the hell didn’t the Ministry clean this up?”

“Mr. Potter!” a tired looking man ran over to them and noticed the others. “Oh my, it’s good to see you, Mr. and Mrs. Dursley, Mr. Dursley.” He looked at the other man and asked more than stated. “Mr. Lupin, I believe?”

The three Dursley’s just nodded at their greetings. Vernon added, “Yup, that’s me.”

Remus elbowed Dudley when he seemed to be about to say something. He acknowledged the man with a nod. “Yes, I’m Mr. Lupin. And you might be?”

“Oh, so sorry about this.” The slightly frantic man said. “I’m Riddick Bode. I’m with the Department of Mysteries.”

“The Department of Mysteries?” Harry asked. “You seem to be quite capable of communication, so I’m guessing you’re not an Unspeakable.”

“No, Mr. Potter,” Bode said. “My father was one, but I declined the offer and work on the more public research projects. We are a department of the Ministry and therefore must produce a few things for public consumption.”

Vernon looked around curiously. “But why are you here? And why haven’t the bloody reversal squa- Owwww!”

Harry pulled his finger back from the sweaty grip of the rolls of fat in Vernon's stomach. "Please, Uncle, you don't know as much about the magical world. Shut up, before you say something stupid."

Vernon pouted but blushed and made a motion as though he were zipping his mouth shut.

"Mr. Bode," Harry addressed. "Why hasn't the Ministry done more to repair? Or even hide this?"

Riddick shrugged. "That's why I'm here. So far, they haven't been able to do anything at all about it. They've got muggle repelling and Notice-me-Nots up. They fixed Number Six and Number Two Privet Drive, and wiped the memory of everyone else around here, but they cannot seem to get anything to actually work in the area that I've termed ground zero."

Harry sighed.

Riddick nodded. "It's almost as if the smoldering ruin wants to stay a smoldering ruin."

Harry turned to the Dursleys. "Well, I say we let it stay a smoldering ruin then. How about you guys?"

"Fine by me," Petunia said.

Vernon just nodded.

Dudley smiled. "Never much liked that house anyway."

"Well then," Harry cheerfully agreed. "That solves that. Did any of you want to say goodbye to any specific neighbors?" Harry asked and kept nodding and glancing towards Mr. Bode.

Dudley shook his head, while Vernon just turned to the people who had come out onto their lawns seeing the Dursleys again. "So long, suckers!" He cheerfully greeted before turning back to Harry. "That's all I needed."

Riddick just looked at the Dursleys oddly.

"Well, it was pleasure meeting you, Mr. Bode," Harry said. "But we have some things we need to do today. Are we done here?"

Riddick paused. "Err... yeah. I wasn't expecting you to stop by."

Petunia nodded and added, "Well, if you were wanting it, you have our blessing to do anything you want with our smoldering ruin."

"Thanks." Riddick uncertainly responded.

"Alright, guys. Let's go to Grunnings." Harry announced and led them back the way they came.

"Mr. Pewterschmidt!" Vernon Dursley cheerfully interrupted the executive board meeting. "This will only take a moment of your time."

Vernon tugged his son Dudley, and fellow Grunnings employee with him into the office. "I just wanted to give you notice in person, that Dudders and I quit. We've decided to stop denying ourselves and to live the life the voices in our heads want us to have." Vernon explained to the shocked faces of the board room. "See, Dudley and I are more than just father and son. We're also lovers. And sadly this archaic, constrictive, unfeeling British society will never accept the love between a father and son for what it's truly capable of, and so we are going to sail the seas until we find the Norse Gods who guide us or a gay cruise ship we can stow away on and earn our living in the galley. Have a lovely day."

Dudley was biting his bottom lip to keep from saying anything, though he kept his hand firmly on Vernon's ass through the whole speech. His rapidly reddening face added to the veracity of Vernon's explanation.

Vernon turned around and spanked Dudley soundly. "Come along, my Dudders."

The last thing the executives at Grunnings saw was a lecherous grin on Vernon Dursley's face as he rhetorically asked his surprisingly fitter looking son, "Who's your daddy?"

Harry looked at the grins Vernon and Dudley had on their faces as they left the building. "Vernon and Dudley are not going to be welcomed back to their jobs ever again, are they?"

Vernon looked horrified. "I should hope not. Those two boys have a few screws loose."

Dudley choked a bit. "Please don't phrase it that way... daddy."

Moony grinned. "Alright, just give us the highlights, and be honest."

Vernon started counting on his fingers, "Voices in the head, Norse Gods, gay cruise ships, and a love that shant speak its name."

Harry pumped his fist. "Yes! I knew it!"

Remus grumbled and paid Harry the galleon. "Gay cruise ships. Honestly, what are the odds these two even know about gay cruise ships."

Vernon looked at his wife. "Well, there was this misunderstanding-"

"Stop!" Petunia screeched. "They don't need to know this."

Vernon looked at the eager faces Dudley and Moony had. And the slightly worried look on his son's face. "But Lils..." he whined.

"No." Petunia insisted. "Not if you ever want to have sex again."

"Fine," a defeated Vernon grumbled.

"Not exactly role model parents, are you guys?" a slightly perturbed Harry asked.

Petunia cursed. "Shit! I keep forgetting you're our son, Harry. I'm sorry. You were just 15 months old and we've not exactly gotten used to having impressionable young minds around."

Harry waved off her apology. "No worries, I think I'm not near as impressionable as I used to be, though knowing my parents and seeing only the Dursleys is probably mentally scarring me for life, so why don't we get out of here?"

Harry made sure they wouldn't be noticed and transported everyone back to the Chamber of Secrets.

"Err, Harry," Vernon asked. "That wreckage was pretty impressive. Just how powerful are you?"

Harry shrugged. "I'm more powerful than most, I know that."

Dudley was quite familiar with Harry's modesty and asked, "Moony, how powerful is he?"

Remus grinned at the frown on Harry's face. He put a hand up in the air. "If this is what muggles and squibs are," Remus put his other hand about six inches above the first one, "and this is about where we are, as better than average power wizards." Remus moved his first hand six inches above the other, "And this is about where Dumbledore is," Remus paused and seemed unsure about where to put his hand now. "Then Harry would be approximately... the God that created and controls our very existence."

Harry shook his frustrated head. "Thanks Moony."

Moony dropped and bowed. "Praise be to Potter."

Harry frowned harshly, and shot a couple lightning bolts out his eyes that singed Remus' clothes. Moony just giggled as he continued to run from Harry. He turned to his family. "I probably am more powerful than Albus, but it's not exactly something you can just measure."

"Nice!" Vernon cheered.

"Alright, give me a minute to finish the Polyjuice Potion." Harry explained as he got up and went to a work area.

“Remus?” Petunia asked. “We covered some of Harry’s career paths, but you never told us what you’ve been doing? I hope those old Werewolf laws aren’t getting in the way.”

Moony smiled, “Well as Padfoot here knows, for a year I even had Harry’s job. In fact I taught Harry Defense Against the Dark Arts for his third year. After that it was the war for a few years, but most recently I’ve become the Senior Creative Director in a well-known international chain.”

“What?” Dudley asked. “What does all that gibberish mean?”

“It means, my fellow Marauder, that I am living the dream.”

“No freaking way!” Vernon cheered. “For real?”

Remus smiled widely and bowed. “Yes, yes. I have a career in the pranking business.”

“Oh Remus,” Petunia tried to fight a smile. “You could do so much more.”

“Aww come on Lils,” Moony grinned. “You know you’re proud of me. In fact there are only two people who can overrule my decisions, and who also have my utmost respect in their pranking capacity.”

“Who?” Dudley asked, impressed some corporate stiff had Moony’s respect.

Remus rolled his eyes. “Geez Padfoot, I figured you could have guessed. But the gentlemen I am referring to are Messrs. Gred and Forge Weasley.”

“The twins?” Dudley happily exclaimed.

“Are neither gentle nor arguably men.” Harry yelled and added in from his distant work area.

Remus smiled. “The peanut gallery over there is also the silent partner and co-founder, despite having done little to help us.”

"I haven't sued you... yet." Harry yelled again, still not looking up from his work with the potion.

"Weasleys' Wizard Wheezes has more than double the industry share of its nearest competitor, as well as franchises and affiliates in every major wizarding center." Remus proudly towed the company line. "They've created trends now bucking the markets for several industries, and formed corporate alliances with the makers of Chocolate Frogs and Bertie Botts. By a wide margin, the current most popular items for children are Weasley's Wizard Every Flavor Wheezes."

"What are those?" a fascinated Dudley asked.

Remus grinned proudly. "Why that is a small package with three random pranks in it, one of them is always edible, and it comes with a collectible card featuring famous pranks and pranksters. And believe me, every kid wants a complete set and we've been making a boatload."

"Moony!" Vernon cheered. "That even sounds like a real job."

Remus leaned forward and continued quietly. "One of my better recent ideas was to intentionally misprint a small amount of the prank cards featuring Meg back there with the name 'Harry Hotter'. There's over a thousand correct Harry Potters for every accidental misprint of Harry Hotter. Kids have been trading their brooms for them."

"You don't have to whisper, I know you guys did it on purpose." The peanut gallery yelled back to them.

Moony was giggling. "There's even a special gold series edition of the cards. That particular Harry Potter card is rumored to fend off Dark Wizards, and was reported to have saved a baby from drowning."

A groan was heard from Harry back by the potion.

"What's taking so long?" Dudley asked. "I know it takes a month to brew a Polyjuice."

"I'm infusing the items with Dementor Blood to make it permanent. The Polyjuice I just stole from Severus."

"Oh," Dudley said, still unfamiliar with Dementor Blood.

"And," Harry disappeared and reappeared right by them with a pop. "It's ready."

He gave them all their respective Polyjuice vials and presented his parents with their old wands.

"Bottoms up," Dudley and Vernon said at the same time, and all three drank their delicious concoctions.

"Oh that stuff is rancid," Vernon said as he tried not to throw up.

The three of them were clutching their stomachs and moaning as their bodies shifted form and shape. There was pain as the bones stretched or shrunk as necessary. And then it was done.

"Wow," Harry and Remus echoed each other, seeing James, Lily, and Sirius properly again for the first time.

Sirius and James looked pretty silly in clothes that were really big on them. Lily on the other hand got a little shorter and filled out quite nicely. Her curves were tightly straining some areas of Petunia's skinny outfit.

"Damn," Harry said as he realized his mum was a serious fox. "Oh god." He paled.

Remus looked over at Harry and smiled. "Yup, still carrying that post-pregnancy baggage in all the right places."

Harry meekly agreed and looked over at the changes in his dad. "Bloody hell. You look just like me."

James smiled back at his son and gave him a big thumbs up. "I've got a son, who's also an evil twin. This is great."

Lily looked between her husband and her son. "Oh god." She paled.

Remus just cracked up laughing at the situation.

Sirius spread his arms and looked towards Moony. "How about some robes?"

Remus obliged and transfigured his outfit into a simple black robe. Sirius responded by running straight at Remus and giving him a proper hug. Remus reciprocated while the three Potters looked at each other uncertainly.

Harry saw the looks his parents were giving him and gestured towards them as he approached. "Come on, hug."

James and Lily relaxed and gave their grown-up son a hug.

Remus and Sirius watched the awkward group hug. Sirius grimaced, "it's like they're strangers who've never met."

Remus just looked at Sirius.

"Oh right," Sirius looked a little ashamed.

Harry, James, and Lily all smiled at each other as they broke apart with matching uncertain faces. It's a bit weird meeting your parents or son for the first time and all being twenty-one. And a total group maturity of about seventeen.

"Well," Harry began. "I think it's time we figure out where you guys want to be, and who you want to be."

James stepped back. "You're kicking us out?"

Harry looked at the scared look on his dad's face. "No, not at all. I mean if you really wanted, we could set up here as a permanent place to live. Or I've got a few apartments and houses, not to mention all the other family properties, or even Moony's place. I just wasn't sure if any of you all wanted to live with me or each other or where.

And considering you've all been dead for a while, I didn't think we'd need to worry about your appearance but that we shouldn't be calling you James, Lily, and Sirius."

"Oh! Oh! Can I be Albusforth?" Sirius asked excitedly before his eyes widened. "Or Hismione!"

Remus laughed while Harry paused and replied, "Err, I suppose if you want. But I was thinking for simplicity's sake you could just be Padfoot, and Dad, you could be Prongs."

James nodded and thought that made sense.

"But what about me?" A sad little Lily asked. "I want to use my Marauder nickname."

Harry was surprised to hear this. "You have one?"

"No," Lily pouted. "I kept putting off learning animagus, and these knuckleheads won't give me one without it."

James raised his hands to his wife's angry stare. "Hey, it's the rule. Werewolves are the exception."

Lily seemed to be considering.

"No Lils," Remus rolled his eyes. "I'm not going to bite you."

"Fine," Lily spat out. "It's not like I really wanted you to anyway."

Harry was licking his lips in thought. Finally he spoke up, "I could, uh, hasten your training and make you an animagus."

All four of the others turned to stare at Harry.

"If you want," Harry added quietly.

"Yeah," Lily exasperatedly said. "I do want."

“Harry,” Remus interrupted. “Umm, dead person back to life. Old soul in a new to me body. Are you sure you want to be experimenting with magics that should be impossible.”

Harry waved him off. “I did this before. It works like a charm.”

“On a dead person?” Sirius asked.

“No, on a nine-year old.” Harry said before he could stop himself.

“Harry!” Lily scolded.

Remus sighed. “I thought your secret human experimentation days were over.”

“Oh shush, Moony.” Harry retorted. “It happened to have been what cured Simon. He needed magic that wasn’t his.”

Remus grinned a little finally realizing what had happened to Minnie’s ‘kitten’ as she called him. Remus then realized he probably was in fact a kitten. “That was a good thing you did, Harry.”

“Yes, I thought so,” Harry said. “But I’m not about to give a piece of my magic to just anyone, though I think I could scrape together enough to make Mum here an animagus.”

“You lose it from your own?”

“Not the skills or knowledge. But it does permanently remove a piece of my core.”

“How big a piece?” Lily asked worriedly.

Harry shook his head. “A very small percentage, nothing you should worry about.”

Sirius thinking about how powerful Harry was, said, “Think a drop in a bucket, Lils.”

“More like a drop in the ocean,” Remus added.

Harry sighed. "Trust me, I can afford to do this a number of times. And I'd really like to do it for you. I mean hell, you're my mum. Even for curiosity's sake, I want to know what your form is."

James smiled at his wife. Lily nodded. "Alright. Let's do it."

Harry sat Lily down in front of him and walked her through the process. They were staring into each other's eyes while Harry held onto her hands.

James walked over to Sirius and Remus. "So what do you think she's going to be?"

"Jungle cat, maybe?" Sirius considered. "Tiger Lily sounds disgustingly convenient."

"Harry is ridiculously powerful. Lily could be like a unicorn or something magical."

James looked at his two best friends strangely. "Do you two not remember my wife at all? I think fifteen years of trying to remember the good times may have twisted your perceptions a bit."

"Well," Remus pouted. "What's your guess?"

"I was thinking maybe like a peacock," James guessed. He smiled guiltily. "Maybe a rabbit."

Harry and Lily stood up and approached. "Are you guys ready?"

"Yeah," they all turned and cheered.

Harry went over and stood next to them. "Alright Mum. All you have to do is think the words 'Padfoot's an idiot' and you should-"

Before Harry could finish, Lily popped and immediately there in her place was...

CHAPTER FIVE

Lily was shocked at the change in her senses. She couldn't believe how natural this felt. As if a part of her she had been denying, was finally free. It felt like she just discovered her long lost twin sister and she's now more whole than she ever thought possible.

She started to wiggle her new body in place and looked down at herself. 'Hooves,' she thought. 'Just like James. Although I see I'm all black and white, no greys. That's probably because I'm such a blend of light and dark. I mean I've always been a light witch, but that shield of Love is about as dark as Dark Arts get. Come to think of it, any spells based on love count as Dark Arts. Love is all about controlling a person, taking away their free will, their individuality, even their friends. And arithmatically, we know Love and Hate are practically interchangeable for each other when it comes to intent. Not to mention I tried to invoke a shield of Love with a willing sacrifice. That can't have made it any lighter. Oh yeah, I'm a naughty dark witch.'

Lily looked up and saw all the looks the men were giving. 'Wow. My beauty seems to have shocked them speechless. Course James looks a bit horrified, and Remus looks less composed than I think I've ever seen him.' She began to explore a bit more about her as yet unidentified form. She wiggled something new on her ass and realized, 'Sweet! I have a tail! I knew I would have a tail.'

Harry, Remus, Sirius, and James were all shocked into silence and refused to move. Watching Lily wiggle, Harry immediately tapped his face with his finger. James gulped so loudly it sounded like a cry for help. Remus and Sirius were both biting on their bottom lips, completely horrified at the idea of saying a word out loud. When she started to wiggle, Remus kept his face impassive but inside his body was twittering with unrestrained laughter. Remus looked over and saw Harry's face wasn't even moving with breath, nor was he blinking at all.

Remus subtly poked Sirius and pointed over to Harry. Padfoot saw how still Harry was and looked at Remus curiously. Remus was whispering out of the corner of his mouth. "I'm pretty sure he's

petrified his own face. Lucky bugger. Now Padfoot, don't say a word. I really think she may kill one of us before this is over."

"I hope she kills Harry," Sirius whispered out of the corner of his own unmoving mouth.

Remus' eyes widened.

Sirius continued, "Oh come on. He'd probably come back anyway."

Remus conceded that point, but then all four men noticed Lily start swinging her tail. This was getting more and more difficult.

Lily saw Remus, Sirius, and James' eyes all just about bulge out of their heads when she was whipping her tail back and forth. Harry's pupils dilated instantly, but it looked like his face didn't even move. She thought she'd ask them what the matter was and opened her mouth. She was unprepared when the only sound that came out was, "Moo."

Harry, Remus, Sirius, and James all started turning red as soon as she mooed. The humor over the situation fled their bodies quickly when for the first time ever, they saw what was unmistakably a furious cow. The cow in question walked over and just stared angrily at Harry.

Harry quickly tapped his face and removed the petrification spell. He calmly and quietly said, "T- t- to change back, all you need to do is think the words 'Harry's a...'" Harry stopped when his voice cracked. "Harry's a genius." He finished.

With a soft pop, the cow transformed immediately back into a far less than pleased Lily Potter.

"Not a word," Lily hissed out. "The first person that says anything, I will castrate, and then use those parts to eviscerate them."

All four men stood completely still for a prolonged silence.

Weakly, James said, "Love you, honey."

Lily snapped her gaze at her husband but didn't return the proclamation.

Harry realized the other Marauders were in a lot of danger, and he probably was the most likely to get through this unscathed. He quietly and honestly said, "I thought you were very beautiful, Mommy."

Being called Mommy, even in an obvious attempt to calm her, did wonders for settling Lily's agitation. "Thank you, Harry."

Sirius, not a man known for his restraint, carefully tittered out, "Moooo-" Everyone snapped surprised looks at him. "-oooony, what do you think would be a good Marauder name?"

Remus paled and weakly said, "Err... I think this honor should fall to Omega."

Harry was looking around like a cornered skittish cat. "Err... umm... fine." He hurriedly rattled out, "Mr. Omega humbly suggests Bessie."

In the span of less than a second, Remus yelled "Seconded," Padfoot blurted out "Thirded," and Prongs immediately took the safe route his friends offered and said. "I abstain."

"What?" Lily asked dangerously.

Harry took advantage of the moment and hurried out, "Agreed then, welcome Miss Bessie. I'm just gonna..." And with a pop Harry safely removed himself from the situation.

Remus' eyes widened and he hurriedly exclaimed, "I'm going to see if Meg..." before turning tail to run.

"Me too," Sirius agreed and he chased after Remus.

Sirius and Remus were on the far side of the Chamber nosing around leaving Prongs to cheer up the newly christened Bessie.

"You skirts," Harry scolded with smile.

“Shhhh!” Remus said as he spun around to find Harry.

Harry rolled his eyes. “I’ve got a silencing charm up around here.”

“Oh, you do?” Sirius asked.

Harry nodded.

And that was their cue, as Remus and Sirius began howling in laughter. It was infectious as Harry too fell into giggles.

Sirius was wiping tears of mirth from his eyes. “Lils is a cow. That’s priceless.”

Remus was still snickering, remembering the abject look of horror on Lily’s cow face when she mooed. “Never in a million years, would I have guessed that.”

“Really?” Harry asked, having settled down. “That seems kind of odd, then, that it’s her form, doesn’t it? Because I mean, I fought a sixty foot basilisk when I was twelve. And I’ve never been more scared than I was back there. She was not happy with her form.”

Sirius shrugged. “She does kind of chew as though her lower jaw is unhinged, in a goofy sort of cute circular fashion.”

Harry was thinking deeply. “But she never struck you as very cow-like back then?”

Remus shook his head. “She’s never had a weight problem, and has a bit more attitude than I associate with cows. Of course, we don’t really know the devious things cows may be thinking.”

Sirius was a bit unsettled, briefly imagining Lils leading a cow revolution.

Harry was shaking his head. “I know your form is your form, and doesn’t change, but I wonder if being dead and coming back, gave

her... like a reset since she hadn't ever connected with whatever her form had been when she was alive, cow or otherwise."

Sirius immediately popped into his familiar grim-like form and back. "I'm still me."

Harry rolled his eyes. "Of course you and Prongs have already trained, know your form intimately and have connected with it. I just can see how the cow form fits her better now, than it may have back then."

Remus considered the possibility and thought Harry's theory made sense. "Let's talk to Bessie and find out. I figure Prongs has said something stupid, and apologized properly by now."

The three of them made it back to main area and saw James doing his best to maintain his balance as he rode up top on a wild and crazy cow ride. He was facing the wrong way and needed both of his hands to keep from tipping left or right. And, of course, Bessie's speed would probably be described as a lackadaisical amble at best.

"Hey guys," James cheerfully greeted. "I'd offer you a ride on Bessie here, but they're not as fun as you might think."

"What are you doing?" Remus asked the turned around rider.

James grinned sheepishly. "Umm... reverse cow... girl."

With a pop, Lily transformed back and James fell to the floor directly behind her. "Oww, damn Lils. A little warning?"

She just glared at her husband. "I'm not the one offering sexual positions to our son, you imbecile."

James laughed. "Oh right," while Harry looked on worriedly.

Harry smiled carefully. "So, can I assume we've become more accepting of our inner cow?"

Lily blushed prettily and nodded her head. "Yes. The form felt really right, when it happened, it's just... not what I was expecting."

"We were discussing the same thing," Remus agreed. "I believe Harry had some ideas on how a cow may not have been your form when you were alive."

"Oh?" Lily asked. "Why's that? Because I certainly never felt any connection with cows before, though I do now."

"Well, I mean, not to be too crude or anything, but you died fifteen months after giving birth, still very much mothering me, and frankly providing milk. By bringing you back, I thought maybe since you hadn't connected before, your form may have been reset by, in some ways, being reborn." Harry explained. "Sort of stuck eternally in that provider role and you died before ever doing any of other things in your life you may have planned. Not that I know that much about cows, but they don't seem to do a whole lot."

"And there's the way you chew your food," Sirius added helpfully. Lily returned the favor with a conjured rubber ball that she beaned him with.

"And," Harry continued ignoring Sirius' wails about his head, "there is the whole, you died to save me, and the wizarding society views you as sacred, practically worships you."

Remus chuckled. "I hadn't even thought about that, but you're right. Bessie here would be a sacred cow if there ever was one."

Harry nodded. "It is one of the few creatures, entire societies respect and cultures revere as holy."

Sirius chuckled as he rubbed his rapidly swelling noggin. "Holy Lils."

Harry rolled his eyes. "But I am curious why you seemed so upset, because your anger seemed stronger than any disappointment."

Lily sighed. "I wasn't disappointed. It was just... I was remembering school. And your bitch of a cousin, Sirius."

“Which one?” Sirius asked.

“Ohhhh,” Remus said as realization dawned over him. “Narcissa.”

Lily nodded. “Yes, Narcissa,” she said with complete loathing in her voice. Lily saw the confusion on her son’s face. “She used to always call me a ‘fat cow’ or a ‘heifer’ and it really pissed me off when I realized she was right. Hey you think she did some dark ritual to make me a cow?”

Harry looked at the other guys’ faces and shook his head. “I doubt it. I’m not sure something like that is even possible.”

“Poo,” Lily said with a small frown, as she unconsciously fought the impulse to say ‘moo’. “You think maybe the names that I called her back then, came true for her as well?”

Harry chuckled. “They might have. What did you call her back then?”

Lily tapped her chin thoughtfully reminiscing. “I think the most common one was I called her a ‘ferret-faced cum dumpster who could suck the shit from my asshole.’”

Harry smiled widely, impressed with his mum’s verbal skills. “Not too sure about the necro-fecal-philial, but I know she was passed around the Death Eaters more often than the quaffle at the World Cup.”

Lily beamed a victorious smile back. “Well that certainly makes me feel better.”

Harry nodded. “I was thinking you all might want to slowly reacquaint yourself with a post-Voldemort world, and I’ve got a four bedroom apartment under a Fidelius above a particularly noisy business on Diagon Alley.”

“Sounds perfect,” James said. “You are going to live with us, right?”

Harry shrugged. “If you’re sure you want me.”

Sirius, James, and Lily all nodded vigorously.

“There’s a bedroom there for you too, Moony, since I’m assuming my parents will share the Master.” Harry said with a hopeful look at Remus.

Remus saw the pleading on Harry’s face and quickly agreed. “I can stay, but I can also stay at my place too. It’ll probably depend on how sober Padfoot is at any given time.”

“Great!” Sirius cheered and he tried to make his evil smile look happy. “Now before we move into our new place, who’s up for some burgers for lunch?”

“I am-” Lily said before she could stop herself. “Oh.” She apparently just realized something. “Oh no.”

Sirius was laughing at her frustration and never even saw the conjured rubber ball coming his way.

Harry, Remus, Sirius, James, and Lily ate lunch at a muggle restaurant. It went pretty much as Harry expected. His mother was now a reluctant vegetarian, who couldn’t bring herself to even taste any form of beef, though she remembered fondly how juicy and delicious it is. His father was truly as muggle clueless as Harry had expected. Harry also managed to learn why his father swore so distinctively.

“All those slimy Slytherins swear by Salazar. You’re Godric damn right I’ll swear the way I want to.” James explained and proceeded to try and recruit his son to pick up James’ crusade. Apparently James failed to convince anyone else ever before that it was anything short of dorky, but Harry showed genuine interest.

Harry mentioned he would do his best to convince a new generation to swear by Godric, and James misunderstood his son’s enthusiasm. When Remus explained it’s because now they swear by Potter, James made his son promise to abandon his campaign of swearing by Godric. Harry reluctantly gave in, after he was forced to Obliviate a small family for the third time that evening.

When dessert rolled around, and Sirius asked if there were any desserts that came with beef, Lily just flung her fork right at him. Her aim was dead-on, but Harry had halted the fork's movement and it was hovering with its pointed tips about an inch from Padfoot's eyebrow. Harry decided this was time to go, seeing as a mass memory charm was going to interrupt dessert. It took a little arguing before Padfoot agreed they actually should pay for their meal, but the group left and Harry wiped all memory of their presence that evening.

With a pop, the quintet reappeared in Harry's Diagon Alley apartment. What they were not expecting was for there to already be someone there.

"Welcome," the old man said. "I've been expecting you."

Harry felt like crying in relief. "Nicholas! I am so glad to see you."

"Would you believe I could tell you needed my guidance?" Nicholas Flamel's eyes twinkled as he smiled at everyone. "Hello Remus, you're looking younger. I suspect your company may have something to do with that."

"You'd be correct as usual, Nicholas." Remus grinned. "I'm well aware of Harry's manners, so allow me to introduce Padfoot, Prongs, and the newly christened Bessie here. Gentlemen and lady, I'd like you to meet the esteemed Nicholas Flamel."

"Bessie?" Nicholas asked. "Has our young Potter's mother joined the bovine revolution?"

"There is one?" Sirius said with a step back.

Nicholas smiled. "Not yet." Sirius shuddered.

"Err, so what are you doing here, Nicky?"

Nicholas rolled his eyes. "The impatience of youth."

"Oi! I'm older than these two."

Nicholas seemed to be inspecting Lily and James. "Yes, I suppose you are. But anyways, as soon as I realized what was happening, I knew you'd be moving in here, so I brought over a couple portals to the library and the lab. As well as made sure the place looked respectable."

Harry nodded. "That's good thinking. I hadn't quite gotten that far ahead yet."

"Yes, I know." Nicholas said smugly.

Harry looked hopeful. "So with your all seeing eye, do you know what the plan is now?"

Nicholas put both of his fingers to his temples and began softly chanting. When he felt he had probably got as many confused stares as he was going to get, he opened his eyes and stopped chanting. "Yup. You five are going spend the rest of the day inside again, catching up with each other. I'm going to contact some of the people who will be in on the secret of Prongs, Padfoot, and Bessie's identities. And then with their help tomorrow, we're all going to take these reborn homeless charity cases of yours shopping tomorrow, after swinging by the vaults and getting everything they want from there."

James was impressed. "That's a hell of an all seeing eye you got there."

"It helps down at the track." Nicholas agreed. "Oh and that reminds me, Harry. You need to talk to your father and godfather about Tuesday. They'll both agree and you can let Crackhead know at Gringotts tomorrow."

Remus looked at Harry, disbelieving the specificity of Nicholas' so-called predictions. "Is he serious?"

Before Padfoot could say a word, Lily kicked him right in the back of the knee and he crumpled to the floor with a muffled yelp. When Remus turned and smiled at Sirius on the floor, Padfoot knew Moony had done that on purpose.

Harry grinned at the insulted look on his godfather's face. "I don't know Moony. Let's find out. Dad, Sirius? You guys play poker?"

"Course," Sirius said with a grin. "I made sure and teach Prongsy over here. We had many a game in the Tower at night."

"I still don't understand why it had to be strip poker when you were teaching me." James said with a shake of his head.

Harry ignored Sirius' snickering. "Either of you two allergic to goblins?"

James looked at Sirius oddly. "No?"

"Was Moony particularly horrible at poker?"

James and Sirius both laughed.

"I'm not that bad," Remus pouted.

James chuckled. "Moony, your ears wiggle every time you bluff, and if you hit a good hand, your eyes widen and then you cough to try to hide it."

"Every time," Sirius echoed. "It'd be cute, if it wasn't so depressing."

Moony huffed while Harry chuckled. "They'd tear you apart, and I don't want you to lose all your money."

Moony rolled his eyes, not really wanting to play poker anyway.

"Hey!" Lily yelled indignantly. "Why do you assume I'm not playing?"

"Sorry, Mum." Harry didn't really look it. "Goblins play it by war room rules: No wives, no kids."

"But you're my kid?" James half stated, half asked.

"No, I have a seat, and you are my guests." Harry clarified.

"Wait," James asked. "You want us to play poker against the goblins?"

"Not all of them," Harry clarified. "It's just a regular game with most of the High Council."

"This is the High Council game?" Sirius' said reverently. "I heard the last wizards they let play were the Weasleys and that it's because of the game that they... well..."

"Really?" Harry asked. "I never knew that. So, you believe in Nicky's all seeing eye yet Moony?"

Nicholas interrupted. "My all seeing eye says you will still doubt me, Remus, but your more intelligent and better looking friends are true believers."

"He's right." Sirius said while James just nodded. Lily smiled and rubbed her chin. "It is uncanny."

"Har har har." Remus said blandly. "So just who does your all seeing eye think will be joining us tomorrow?"

Nicholas grinned. "I would imagine I could convince Miss Granger, Miss Weasley, and Miss Tonks to assist you. Miss Lovegood I have learned not to make predictions on, so she may or may not join you."

"Oh this sounds like fun," Remus grinned.

"Oh?" Lily asked. "Are some of them the girls my son is involved with?"

"All but one of them and even her I sometimes wonder about." Remus cheerfully pointed out while Harry groaned. "When prodded they get catty around each other. It is fun."

James and Sirius snickered at the glimmer of happiness on Remus' face. Lily giggled. "Oh Remus, we really do need to get you laid."

Remus was about to retort when he stopped at the wide grins on his three dead friends' face. He groaned and was silently cursing Harry.

"Careful what you say about his mother," Nicholas grinned. "She's right over there."

Remus quit his soft mumbling and damned fossils and their magical hearing aids. He saw Harry hold in a snort when he said it.

"Alright," Nicholas said and drew everyone's attention. "I'm going to track down our shopping assistants for tomorrow before Remus finishes calculating just how long it really has been. He'll get all depressed and then start giving us his bedroom eyes."

Remus frowned playfully at the old man's ribbing. "Why did I ever think you were a friend?"

"Uh oh," Nicholas warned. "It's started already. You guys enjoy your evening. Dobby's got your dinner, and yes, Bessie, there's plenty of lettuce. And I will make sure the girls are in the twins shop at ten A.M." Nicholas wagged his fingers goodbye. "Toodles." And with a pop, he disappeared from the apartment.

Remus shook his head. "That old man has spent too much time around you, Meg."

"He's kind of dishy," Lily said. "How old is he?"

Remus just snorted, while James blanched. "Molden oldies? Really, Lils?"

Lily rolled her eyes. "I'm just curious. He seemed so much younger than he looked."

"He turned 676 a couple months ago." Harry said casually.

Lily seemed to all of a sudden remember who he was while James and Sirius just looked at each other with disbelief on their faces. Lily asked, "Wait, isn't he something like the most famous alchemist ever? What's he doing here?"

Harry shrugged. "He's kind of like my secretary."

Remus wondered how Nicholas would feel about Harry's description of him. "Nicholas and Harry have been conducting an ongoing investigation in the uses and capabilities of Dementor Blood for a couple years now. Sort of like the Headmaster did with Nicholas on Dragon's Blood."

"Ahhhh," Sirius said finally understanding. "I was wondering why I kept hearing about that stuff."

"Nicky taught DADA my sixth and seventh year, and he was a sort of mentor of mine for a while. Tutored me on a few things," Harry explained. "He's good to have around when I need to pin the blame on someone else. Even at his age, he still has a use every now and then."

Remus added, "And he's probably respected even more than Albus by just about everyone but the Cheek Master over here."

"Cheek Master?" Lily asked with a smile.

Remus chuckled. "I think it's a self-appointed title, but considering he's got an apprentice studying cheek, it is applicable."

"You've got an apprentice?" James asked. "Who?"

"Dobby." Harry grinned imagining the eccentric elf.

Dobby appeared with a pop, looked over at James, and slapped a hand over his mouth. "Sweet Salazar's ghost, it's James Potter!" With a quick wink towards his Master, Dobby disappeared with another pop.

"Salazar!" James looked over at his giggling wife and best friend. "Did that insolent elf really... just to piss me off..."

Harry's eyes twinkled. "He's a quick learner."

James finally shook his head. "Naw... house elves aren't that evil..."

Harry stuck his hand up in the air. Dobby reappeared with a pop high off the ground and high-fived Harry, disappearing with another pop, before gravity had pulled him all the way down.

Sirius, Remus, and Lily were all laughing at the shocked though slightly impressed look on James' face. He smiled and shook his head. "He is a cheeky bugger."

Harry smiled and shrugged. "Not even I know what's going to happen after he passes his mastery."

"Okay," Lily attracted everyone's attention. "Nicholas said, we're in for the night, and we're catching up more. And I have seen so many things that give me more questions than answers. I want to know more about you, Harry."

Harry settled himself into his chair. "Fire away. What do you want to know?"

Sirius jumped in. "Just what can you do? I mean how powerful are you really? I've been watching the magic you do, and it's scary how easy and controlled things are for you. Albus and that Nicholas fellow, at their age, practiced motions can look effortless. So far, everything you've done has looked that way."

Harry saw Remus was going to be no help, as he looked as curious as everyone else. "I can't be certain, or even be able to describe something like magical prowess, but I'm pretty sure I'm the most magically powerful person in the world. Things do take less effort and are easier for me. I was probably less powerful than Dumbledore at first, but the past few years have had a few unintentional and rather severe changes in my magical core. None of them detrimental."

Lily's eyebrows jumped. "Would you mind elaborating on that?"

"Some things I kind of need to keep to myself to protect the names of the innocent. And me." Harry carefully answered. "But, let's say I bond with an immensely powerful magical creature. Or I may have

undergone a magical phenomenon in an accelerated environment thus increasing my body's response. Exponentially. Or even, that I knew there was this blob of magic that some crazed follower was going to try and reclaim in a nefarious way, and carry on his work, so I just saved everyone the trouble and took it for myself."

Harry raised a hand. "These are all purely hypothetical of course. But any one of them may have happened." Harry ended a little quieter. "Or all of them." He trailed off again. "Occasionally multiple times."

Sirius smiled mischievously. "Better you than me."

"That's great for you son, I'm proud of you son," Lily rhythmically stated. "I worry for you son. But I want to hear more about you. Not super-wizard psycho hero you. What was your first impression of Hogwarts? What did the Sorting hat say? When did you learn magic was real? Ever do any good accidental magic? I want to hear the stories that make your life, and they're not necessarily discoveries or battles."

Harry looked at his Mum oddly. She was an interesting character. Certainly not Molly, but not bad. Just... different. Harry nodded and held out his right hand. It almost looked like a conjuration, but he was actually summoning the object from a portal linked subspace. He caught the pensieve in his hand. "Sounds good to me, but it might be more fun to visit a few of our better memories."

"Brilliant!" James cheered. "I wouldn't mind revisiting the day we accidentally on purpose messed up that invisibility potion so that it only affected females clothes."

"And the nice illusion on Snivelly's clothes," Sirius added with a shake of his finger to James.

James shrugged. "I don't know. For all we know, he really might have been a woman under those illusions."

"Oh bad," Lily said with a frown. "Don't put that visual in my head."

"I'll even start," Harry began. "I'll show you the birthday cake and surprise present I got for my eleventh birthday."

"They baked you a cake?" Sirius asked.

Harry shook his head. "Hagrid used green icing and later gave Dudley a pig's tail. And it's also when I learned I was a wizard and magic is real."

Lily ran forward and hugged her son. "Oh this sounds perfect, Harry."

When she pulled back, Harry was amused to note no signs of wistfulness or melancholy in his mother's expression. Just eager excitement and a bit of anxious impatience.

Harry placed the memory into the pensieve and the five Marauders all touched the surface and fell in.

CHAPTER SIX

“Wow!” James said. “That was bloody exciting stuff. My heart is pounding.”

Lily on the other hand looked a little less thrilled and was quietly observing her son.

“Good god, Meg,” Remus said with a smile. “I’m not sure I would have taken the DADA job if I’d known you killed your first professor.”

“I was eleven.” Harry shrugged and continued in a completely serious tone, “These things happen.”

Remus looked at Harry and wondered if he really believed that.

“Yeah,” Sirius chuckled. “Perfectly commonplace for every Killing Curse survivor I’ve ever known.”

Lily had been pretty quiet and winced. “I hope your second year wasn’t as dangerous as that.”

Harry shrugged. “I thought first year was pretty damn fun, but at least in second year, I didn’t kill any professors.” Harry paused and thought about it. “At least I don’t think I did. Watched one Obliviate himself, and destroyed an evil possessed echo of a young Voldie and his giant killer basilisk.”

“Whoa!” James cheered. “I want to see this.”

Lily frowned and softly added, “I’m not sure I do.”

Harry smiled warmly at his Mum. “Mum, trust me. I only show the fun ones and they all end up okay. Well, for me anyway. Not so hot for Voldie.”

Lily seemed uncertain.

Harry smiled. "Besides, before it's my turn again, you guys have got to show me how you met, and some of your first year."

James nodded. "Our first year wasn't quite as exciting as yours. No daring adventures or battles to the death. But yeah, let me show you my first impressions of these louts."

James put a memory into the pensieve and they all dived in. An eleven year old boy, who looked awfully familiar, hugged his Mum and Dad goodbye on the platform at King's Cross.

"Now you be good, James," his mother chided as she cleaned his cheek. "I don't want to hear about you getting into any mischief."

James looked horrified. "I would never!"

His mother just snorted while Dad leaned down and whispered in James' ear. "Son, you be careful. If your mother finds out I gave you that cloak, we're both going to be grounded all Christmas break."

James smiled widely. "I'll be good. I'll even swear on my mother's grave."

"James!" his mother scolded.

"Bye Mum! Dad!" he cheerfully yelled as he hefted his trunk onto the Hogwarts Express.

James was dragging it down the train looking for an empty compartment. Finally he spotted a friend sitting with only one other small boy. "Frank! Room in this compartment for me?"

"Heya James!" said a boy who could only be Frank Longbottom. "Sure, plenty of room. You excited for your first year?"

"Away from my parents? You bet!" James said as he stowed his trunk away.

Frank saw the shy boy with him wasn't speaking up. "Allow me to make the introduction, James Potter, incoming first year, I would like you to meet another incoming first year. This is Remus Lupin."

James spit in his hand and stuck it out. "Pleased to meet you, Remus. I'm James."

Remus warily looked at the spit on James' hand. Finally he spit on his own hand and shook James'. Frank laughed at the frightened but determined look on Remus' face. Remus said, "Nice to meet you, James."

James was shocked and impressed. Both he and Remus were wiping their hands on their shirts. James explained, "I've never had anyone actually touch my hand after I spit on it. I think I'm going to like you, Remus."

Remus smiled.

"Although," James paused and looked at his hand. "Do you have hairy palms?"

Frank snickered, while Remus paled dramatically.

"My mother was warning me about something to do with hairy palms," James said as he was thinking deeply, completely oblivious to Remus' discomfort and Frank's amusement. "You're not blind by chance? Because I think blindness came after hairy palms..."

Remus shook his head vigorously. "Nope."

Frank was just about to burst out laughing when two other boys ran into the compartment and slammed door shut behind him and leaned against the door to keep it from opening again.

They both looked like first years, one of them was extremely nervous and the other had a wide smile on his face. The grinning one looked at all the people in this compartment, and said, "Jolly good weather we're having, don't you think?"

Vicious pounding on the door was the next response. "Sirius, open this door so I can kill you!"

The grinning young Sirius Black turned to the oldest looking boy in the room and asked innocently, "You wouldn't by chance know any good locking charms, would you?"

Frank giggled a bit and cast a spell that seemed to melt the door frame away.

"Excellent," Sirius exclaimed. He continued in an especially loud voice for the benefit of the people on the other side of the locked door. "Because my cousin Trixie just got her first training bra!" He was yelling just in case the conductor up front couldn't hear. "And it gives you a galleon every time you snap it!"

A shriek and minor stampede was heard on the other side, and the knocking and banging seemed to stop.

"So sorry about that," Sirius said in a more normal voice. "I'm afraid the cootie index today is very high, and my cousin seems highly irritable. She was picking on this fine young chap and I felt I had to intervene."

"Th-thanks," the nervous young man said. "She's pretty scary."

"She's pretty?" Sirius exclaimed disgusted. "I think you need glasses, my good man. Oh by the way, Sirius Black's the name. And you are?"

"Peter Pettigrew," the other young man said.

"I'm James Potter," James introduced. "And this is one of my neighbors, Frank Longbottom, and this hairy palmed first year is Remus Lupin."

"Hairy palms?" Sirius asked with a mischievous grin on his eleven year old face. "I might be able to make you an ointment for that."

Remus shook his head. "I think I'll be okay, but thank you."

“So Frank,” Sirius began. “That was a right spiffy charm you did. What year are you?”

“I’m a third year,” Frank stated. “Gryffindor house. And would I be correct in guessing you two are first years, like James and Remus here?”

Peter nodded, while Sirius assured, “Excellent guess as you would most definitely be correct. And I would love to join you in Gryffindor, but most of the members of my illustrious family are all Slytherins. And gits.”

James laughed. “My parents were in Gryffindor, so I’m guessing that’s where I’m headed.”

Frank rolled his eyes. “Trust me. You are.”

“What about you, Remus? Peter?” James asked.

Remus shrugged. “Don’t know. I didn’t think I’d even be going to Hogwarts until a couple months ago.”

Peter shrugged. “Gryffindor would be nice. I just hope my sorting doesn’t take too long. I don’t like the look of my own blood.”

“Your blood?” Sirius asked perplexed. “What do you mean?”

“I heard that’s how we’re sorted?” Peter asked. “We have to cut ourselves on the jagged rocks of Hogwarts until our blood spells out a limerick that we must then decipher?”

“Who told you that?” James asked with a furrowed brow.

“Err... that would be Trixie,” Peter said.

“Oh,” Sirius waved him off. “She’s just trying to scare you. All you really have to do is jump off the tallest tower. The number of times you bounce determines your house. If you don’t bounce,” Sirius shrugged. “Then not having a house is the least of your worries.” Sirius grinned sheepishly, “I’ve been practicing all summer.”

James looked at Sirius oddly. "I'm not sure that's quite accurate either, Sirius."

"Why do you say that?" Sirius asked curiously.

James pointed with his thumb. "Because Frank looks like he's about to laugh in your face."

And that was when Frank couldn't contain his giggles anymore. "Bouncing sounds like a pretty good way to sort if you ask me."

James shrugged. "My parents wouldn't tell me how we're sorted only that no one's died as far as they know. But I know it's not magical underwear or a vision exam. So come on, Frank, tell us."

Frank shrugged. "It's different every year. My year, they just started breaking fingers until we cried out in pain. If you can hold in your screams for at least five, you're a Gryffindor."

It appeared all four eleven year old boys were pretty gullible, given the panic on their faces. A knock on the door echoed in the compartment. Sirius carefully asked in a high-pitched voice, "Who is it?"

"Any sweets from the trolley?"

"Yeah!" James cheered, just as the other boys echoed various affirmations. Frank dispelled his charm and the door opened. All five of them bought some treats and were sharing them around and trading their chocolate frog cards, when another person stuck their head into the compartment. "Anyone got some change for muggle money?"

"You!" James yelled immediately recognizing the redheaded girl.

"You!" the girl yelled just as vehemently at James.

"Oh my," Sirius grinned. "Do you two need some alone time?"

“Eww! No!” the girl spat out. “I was just looking for change.”

“James?” Frank asked. “Aren’t you going to introduce us?”

James stared at the girl. “I don’t even know her name. But you remember that time I asked you to hose me down because I had a highly virulent strain of muggle cooties all over my body?”

Sirius nodded to Remus and Peter. “This sounds good.”

“She’s the one who licked you?” Frank asked looking over the girl.

“Told you.” Sirius said with another nod towards Remus and Peter.

“No it was her dog that licked me,” James explained frustrated.

“And it was me who kicked your butt,” the girl insisted.

“Beaten up by a girl!” Sirius exclaimed and shook his head. “How can you even show your face, James?”

“She didn’t beat me up,” James corrected with a frown.

“Really?” the girl asked. “Because I seem to remember seeing you running away screaming.”

“You got your girl sweat all over me!”

“You kicked my dog!”

“It was an accident! He was about to pee on me!”

“You were wearing a red dress. He thought you were a fire hydrant.”

James scowled. “Those were robes! And you’ve probably never even seen a Hydra before.”

And for the first time, the girl was shocked into silence.

Sirius jumped in finally, now that the two had stopped screaming. "I'm dying to know the name of the girl who beat up this young gentleman."

She turned to the grinning young boy. "Lily Evans. And you are?" She asked in an especially snooty manner.

Her haughtiness struck a chord with Sirius and he smiled at her and explained, "Me? I'm Delirious. Delirious Black. And this fellow you beat up is James Poofter. Over there is Remus Poopin, Penis Penisgrew, and Frank err... Longbottom."

Lily rolled her eyes. "You're weird." She turned to walk away, giving up hope on finding change.

"Go on," James urged. "Get out of here. And never come back!"

Lily whipped her head around. "You're not the boss of me. I'll stay here if I want to."

James was confused. "Do you want to?"

"No!" Lily yelled, turned, and left the compartment.

"Merlin, I hate that girl." James grumbled. "Why couldn't she just stay a muggle?"

Sirius grinned. "I'm starting to like her. She's got spunk... you know, for a girl."

"Careful you who hate," Peter said. "Because my grandma said 'hate' is just a nice way of describing repressed sexual tension."

Frank and Sirius started giggling, while James and Remus just looked at Peter oddly.

"Sexual." Sirius chuckled.

"What about that Dark Lord fellow, Voldemort?" James asked. "He's got a lot of hate I'd bet."

“You said his name!” Sirius gasped. “My family says you’re not supposed to say his name.”

“Why not?” James asked.

Sirius shrugged. Peter spoke up, “I heard if you say his name three times in front of mirror, he appears behind you.”

Remus considered it. “That’d be a right useful way to catch him.”

Sirius asked, “What kind of name is Voldemort anyway?”

James leaned forward conspiratorially, “I heard it’s American for love me more.”

Remus looked at James oddly.

Sirius looked like he was trying to remember something and asked, “Do you speak American?”

James shook his head. “Nope. But it sounds like old Love-Me-More has an awful lot of repressed sexual tension.”

“Hang on,” Remus said as he lifted a finger to his mouth. Everyone quieted and listened.

“I don’t hear anything,” James finally said after a few seconds of silence.

“I think someone in the compartment behind us is crying.” Remus said.

Sirius shrugged. “I’ll check it out,” he said and got up before anyone could stop him.

The four boys all sat quietly, looking at each other trying to listen.

As it turned out, they didn't need to strain their ears at all. An unknown voice screamed, "I miss my mommy, okay! Now leave me alone!"

Sirius hurried back into their compartment and shut the door behind him. He let out an exasperated breath. "What a sniveling sniveler."
"He missed his mommy?" Harry asked incredulously. "And Penis Penisgrew?"

"And it never did." Remus finished conclusively.

"I don't want to know how you know that Remus," Lily said with a pained face. "And whatever happened to Peter anyway?"

"Yeah," Sirius asked. "Moony said you caught him, proved my innocence and then he managed to escape from you."

Harry nodded but wouldn't meet their eyes.

James stood firm. "He also said there's not exactly much of a manhunt these days looking for him."

"Yeah, you know Ministry resources don't need to be stretched too thin." Harry explained weakly.

"And why the hell am I not more pissed?" Remus suddenly realized.

"Crap." Harry said. "Sorry Moony, but it wasn't worth worrying over."

Remus growled. "He owes me an awful lot."

"Us too," Lily added with a feral look.

Remus stopped. "That's right. You three he owes more. I keep forgetting you're not dead and take precedence on the righteous vengeance scale."

"There's a scale?" James asked. "Actually, nevermind. Considering Harry's lack of eye contact, I have a feeling he knows exactly what happened, and it couldn't be anything less than Peter's loss of life,

magic, or some incredibly cruel and unusual punishment on a similar level, right?"

Harry looked up and nodded.

"Why didn't you tell me?" Remus asked.

"Actually, that was your idea," Harry defended. "The three of us voted, and you and Amos asked to be obliviated but left with the knowledge that Pettigrew wasn't going to be a problem ever again."

Remus began knocking on his head, apparently seeing if the muggle method of breaking memory charms might work. "I did?"

Harry nodded. "Yup. Me and Amos overruled you. We just wanted him dead."

"I voted to save him?" Remus asked aghast. "Why would I do that?"

Harry rolled his eyes. "No Moony, you wouldn't settle for less than six months of torture. You agreed with the end result but didn't want him to get it so easily."

"Oh..." Remus said quietly. "Kind of surprised you talked me down to six months."

"Yes well, it was two to one against you, so you had your closure, and I invoked a little Marauder justice."

"What did you do?" Sirius asked excitedly.

"This was when I was still in school, so I couldn't do everything I was wanting to." Harry explained looking at his parents cautiously. "I'm hoping you won't think too much less of me." Harry took a deep breath and let it out. He began, "For the sake of Sirius' pardon I had to let him get away. For about all of ten seconds. Then I caught him again. Locked him into his animagus form and whipped up a potion. Didn't really want to hear any pleadings so I wasn't even letting him transform back." Harry took a deep breath. "I placed two dishes in front of him. I told him he didn't deserve it, but I was giving him a

choice. I said in the left was rat poison, and in the right was a Draught of the Living Death. And I was calling in my life debt. Gave him the choice which one he drank, but he had to drink one. He sniffed them both and drank the one on the right.”

“The Draught of the Living Death?” Remus exclaimed standing up quickly. “So he’s alive?”

Harry rolled his eyes. “Trust me Moony. He’s dead. They wouldn’t know it but a third year class of Hufflepuffs and Ravenclaws even witnessed it.”

“Really?” Remus said, back to being highly interested in this tale.

Harry grinned his evil dark magic grin. “I never mentioned it was a lesser known variation on the Draught of Living Death that actually leaves you conscious and trapped inside your own body. When the rat stopped moving and seemed dead, I told him, he could have done the honorable thing and died peacefully. And then I dropped an unmoving rat, which certainly passed for dead and didn’t breathe into the blood filled feed bucket behind Hagrid’s hut.”

The vicious grins on everyone’s faces told Harry they thought no less of him.

“And yes, I located a tiny silver rat’s paw in some hippogriff diarrhea a few days later.” Harry explained. “Needed it for a thing with Voldie, and I knew the potion wouldn’t sit well in a hippogriff.”

Remus was struggling not to smile. “I still say he should have been tortured.”

James shrugged. “He was once a friend. Just never could get over his own fears. And I’d think maintaining consciousness while being digested by a hippogriff would be a bit torturous.”

“I guess,” Remus relented. “Why aren’t you angrier though? You especially, Sirius. You had a dozen years in prison to hate him.”

“Being dead sort of rearranges the things that matter to you.” Sirius shrugged. “Good times are better than justice for bad times. I’d pretty much written Wormy off like Voldemort. He’s beyond salvation, he’s just a rabid beast that needs to be put down. I know the Peter Pettigrew we went to school with would feel the same way.”

“Excellent point, Mr. Padfoot,” Harry cheerfully added. “Good times are much better, so let’s stick to those if we can. But I think I’m ready for some dinner now.” Harry’s belly let out a loud gurgling sigh. “See?”

Remus shook his head. “I still want to know how you do that.”

“You can make your stomach growl on command?” James asked intrigued.

Harry nodded. “It’s easy. You just have to ask the alien living inside your belly to speak up.”

James looked down at his belly and his jaw dropped when his belly started gurgling too. “Oh my Godric!”

“How the hell did you do that!” Remus asked, before noticing Harry’s snickering. Remus snapped his head back at Harry. “That was you, wasn’t it?”

Harry shook his head. “It would make you so much happier if it was, wouldn’t it Moony?”

Moony was frowning at him but he was interrupted by James stomach letting out a particularly loud growl.

James was rubbing his belly. “Oh... good girl.” James looked up with a smile just realizing, “It’s a girl!”

Lily shook her head and walked off towards the kitchen. “This is going to be hard having two of them around.”

Two gurgling in sync stomachs responded happily.

The next morning at breakfast Sirius was doing his best to convince Lily that you couldn't make an omelet without cow eggs. Sirius was unsuccessful at fooling the newest Marauder, but still he managed to antagonize her to the point of cursing, as a vicious pinching hex drew blood on Sirius' sensitive bottom.

Which naturally led into a conversation on acceptable places to urinate in public. As per usual, the argument turned into a duel between James and Sirius, and they were breaking out several of the old Marauder custom made prank spells. When the dust settled and both combatants regained all the right limbs, proper voices, and were aged correctly the discussion drifted off into the custom made spells, as apparently Moony was unable to divulge company secrets on any of his recent developments.

"Fine Mr. Stuck Up Corporate Stiff," James sniffed. "How 'bout you, Meg? You ever made any prank spells of your own?"

Harry got a wicked smile and snapped his wand to his right without even looking. "Venerio!"

"Ahhh!" Sirius screamed but was unable to dodge the sizzling pink beam. "What the hell was that?"

Remus, apparently, was quite familiar with this homemade curse and laughed out loud.

James and Lily were intrigued. "What the heck is Venerio?"

"What does it sound like?" Harry asked with a wicked grin.

Lily raised an eyebrow. "It sounds like a classification of diseases I've no doubt Sirius is intimately familiar with."

Sirius eye's widened in recognition, and he quickly checked under his robes. "Wah! It's gone!"

Remus was nodding happily.

“Harry!” Sirius acted appalled. “I don’t care what nefarious plans you have for that, but I am definitely going to need it back.”

Harry smiled. “That’s the spell. You have to earn it back.”

Sirius looked at Harry worriedly.

“Not that way!” Harry insisted. “Let’s just say, to a homosexual male, the spell would be considered cruel.”

“Ohhhh,” Sirius relaxed significantly. “That’s all? That I can handle.”

“I should hope so,” Harry nodded. “But until then, you’re peeing sitting down.”

Sirius faced fell into small shocked look. “Oh.”

“That’s my boy!” Lily yelled proudly as she ran up to and hugged her son. She whispered into his ear. “You will teach me that spell.”

Harry rolled his eyes and nodded. He whispered back, “Later.”

Before Sirius could renew the public urination argument with some fresh addendums to the theorized rules, Harry announced loudly, “Alright. It’s time to head downstairs and do some shopping. And please, let’s try not to attract much attention.”

Harry spotted the four girls standing around in the Weasleys’ Wizard Wheezes private back room, as the group came down the Fidelius hidden stairwell. Before he could even greet them, Ginny yelled, “Harry!”

Tonks jumped up. “What the heck is going on?”

“Potter!” Hermione snarled. “You better explain this.”

Following behind Harry so far was only his mother, and the girls all immediately took predatory stances at seeing an attractive redhead joining them.

Luna's eyes widened more than usual. "Wow!"

Harry grinned cheekily at the three girls' territorial, and Luna's dumbfounded, expression. "Yes, yes, yes. I admit, I made a little booboo, and will have three unexpected visitors for an indeterminate period of time."

Hermione looked at Harry, completely confused.

"Hermione, Ginny, Tonks, Luna, I would like you all to meet Bessie."

"Err hello," Tonks greeted uncertainly.

The three other men seemed to appear out of thin air for those unaware of the Fidelius secret.

Harry added with a lecherous grin. "And you all know Moony, and should recognize Prongs and Padfoot." Harry winked and shrugged. "My new roommates."

Hermione and Ginny just stood there in complete silence and shock. Luna seemed incredibly turned on. Tonks' eyes began to water. "Si-Sirius?"

Sirius grinned brightly. "Heya cuz. Long time no see, eh?"

Tonks responded with something between a snort, a whimper, and a cry of fear. It came out "Bloody frickin' hell." She embraced her favorite first cousin, once removed.

Hermione just looked down and pinched the bridge of her nose. "Oh Harry. Please tell me you're not still on about that application for godhood thing."

Harry sighed. "That was a joke, Hermy."

"Accidental or not," James smiled cheekily. "You should still list this under Extracurricular Activities."

“Oh Merlin,” Ginny said as she took a step back. “There’s two of them.”

“I know!” James agreed whole-heartedly. “My very own evil twin!”

“Why am I always the evil one?” Harry pouted. He looked at all the disbelieving faces. Harry reluctantly nodded. “Fine. Stupid question.” Harry grumbled quieter. “Stupid people.”

The four girls and five Marauders lapsed into silence for a second. Luna began happily, “So, Harry? What have you been doing lately?”

Harry smiled thankful he could always count on Luna’s straightforwardness.

“And who?” Lily calmly asked. She was rewarded by seeing all four girls blush.

Ginny smacked Hermione on the shoulder. “Hey!”

Hermione closed her eyes. “It’s for you! I’m embarrassed for you. And now it’s hard not to picture Harry...” Hermione gulped and stopped herself from saying anything more.

Sirius sidled up next to Remus. “I take it Hermione’s the one you’re not sure on?”

Remus nodded. “She’s been dating Nicholas for a little while now, but sometimes around Harry it’s just...”

“Like all the alarms are going off,” Sirius explained. “But the tests all come back negative.”

Remus agreed. “And you can only treat the disease, not the symptoms.”

“You know I am standing right here?” An appalled Hermione yelled out.

“Hiya Hermione,” Remus greeted.

Sirius looked around the room. He smiled disarmingly at Hermione.
“Would you like me to get you a chair?”

“What!” Hermione answered.

“So you’re not just standing right here.” Sirius impudently explained.

Hermione turned to Harry. “Did you make them dumber, Harry?”

Harry covered his mouth and held back his snort.

“Oi!” Sirius yelled before quieting. “I’m sorry! I’m... sorry. It feels like it was just the other day that I was laying my life on the line to save my Godson,” Sirius was sniffing and holding back tears. “And then... and then I’m dead. And that’s it. My life is over. I’m done.” Sirius stared off into space, well aware Harry was rubbing circles into his back to try and calm him down. “And I know I am not exactly emotionally balanced right now.”

James didn’t seem to visibly move, but there sounded like a muffled guffaw.

“But, really, that’s no reason to be rude and just try to... try to hurt my feelings.” Sirius was truly crying now, and Harry lent him his shoulder. Harry was patting Sirius on the back and whispering soothing words to him, the whole while just staring disappointedly into Hermione’s eyes.

“I tried to be a good person.” Sirius wailed. “I tried to do my best, but some people...”

Hermione felt horrible. She opened her mouth to speak, but nothing could ever come out. She was furiously wiping the tears from her eyes and completely unable to say anything or move.

Tonks narrowed her eyes at her first cousin, once removed. “Hey! Wait a minute...you’re doing that thing...”

Sirius whipped his head around with an astonished look of delight on his face. "Oh man, that was awesome!" Sirius demanded a high-five from Harry as he whooped in joy. "Did you see her face?" Sirius pointed to the confused and crushed looks Hermione was alternating between. "That was priceless!"

Harry saw the dangerous look on Hermione's face but couldn't fight it. He collapsed into laughter at his godfather.

Hermione on the other hand was not pleased by this in the slightest. "Harry James Potter! I know you're not laughing at me."

Harry tried to hold in his laughing and looked to Sirius for help.

Sirius was still grinning and snickering. "Ruh roh. She used the full name. You're in for it now."

This didn't help Harry's situation any, but it did have the added effect of making everyone else laugh a bit too. Well, besides Hermione, that is. She still failed to see any amusement in the situation. Naturally this compounded it for everyone else.

Sirius seeing the angry look on Hermione's face took action. He popped into his animagus form and meekly walked up to Hermione. He bowed his head in obedience and whined pathetically. He was giving her his best sad puppy dog eyes.

Hermione's face betrayed no expression. She remained still as Sirius approached. As soon as the large black dog Padfoot was close enough, Hermione let fly a mighty kick to the dog's ribs.

And once again, before everyone's current bout of laughter had even subsided they started a new bout.

Sirius popped back into his human form. "Ohh, damn bitch," Sirius said as he laughed to hide his pain and rubbed his ribs. "That bloody hurt."

Hermione smiled victoriously. "Good."

"There it is again, Moony. The alarms are blaring," Sirius happily pointed out.

"And the tests are still negative," Remus nodded. "I know."

Hermione gave both older Marauders a dirty look and turned back to Harry. "Err, Harry? Did you perchance read the Daily Prophet this morning?"

Harry shook his head. "I've not seen a paper in over a week. Why, what's up?"

Hermione shook her head. "Well yesterday's was full of conspiracy theories about the apparent creation of a magical black hole on Privet Drive. And pleas for information from anyone who knows anything about what happened or is happening. And today's article shed a little light on the situation, though it raised some pretty compelling questions."

"What's a magical black hole?" Sirius asked. "I wouldn't think a hole could really be magic. I mean it's not really even a thing is it?"

"It's not even close to what you're thinking of," Remus explained to Sirius.

Harry's curiosity was definitely piqued now. "Can I just see the paper?"

Hermione smirked and handed Harry a copy.

Harry looked at the picture and immediately recognized the scene. He feared someone eavesdropping on that conversation.

Privet Drive Magical Phehomenon: Harry Potter has the answers?
Startling evidence that may be perhaps linked to the massive magical phenomenon, has come to light through an anonymous informant. The rumors reporting Harry Potter's involvement seem to be true. According to sources there was an experiment involving Dementor Blood that caused a massive explosion. There were no casualties from the explosion, nor was it an attack, but either an accident or

miscalculation. If it is as many suspect, related to Dementor Blood, then more than likely the results' findings or chain of events that led up to this point will be kept secret until the research project team feels it can safely reveal what transpired two days ago. Already, the wizarding world has seen just how powerful Dementor Blood's effects can be. And it may be a long time before we even find out conclusively what really did happen on Privet Drive. Rather than theorize or incorrectly assume anything about Mr. Potter, we have included the brief piece of conversation with the picture you see. As with all our special audio editions of the Daily Prophet, you need only press your thumb on the corner of the picture to hear what is being said. We ask that you all draw your own conclusions.

Harry sighed fearing just how much was overheard. He really, really didn't want the public to know very much on this. At least not yet. He took a deep breath, and put his thumb on the corner of the picture. He watched himself in the photograph clear his throat. He heard him say, "Okay, without going into too much unnecessary detail-"

Harry saw Albus slink down into his seat and say, "Oh dear."

Harry feared what was coming next and hoped it didn't carry on too far. He watched the picture of him, readjust himself uncomfortably and explain, "I basically was doing Dudley-" And then the picture stopped and started itself back up from the beginning. "Okay, without going into too much..." Harry removed his thumb relieved that this secret hadn't spread. They may be up a certain creek, but they at least still had a paddle. Harry's mind then replayed the conversation in the picture.

"Aww bugger."

CHAPTER SEVEN

Lily was reading over her son's shoulder and listened to the recording at the same time he did.

"Aww Bugger," Harry said.

Lily smiled honestly. "I think that kind of language is the problem, not the solution, Harry."

Harry groaned wondering how many of these jokes he would be in for now.

Lily handed the paper to Remus, while James and Sirius read over his shoulder. When they played the audio and it ended and began to repeat all three of them reacted in their own way. James was shocked and covered his gaping mouth stuck open with a small "Oh." Sirius shook his head a couple times and stuck his fingers in his ears to clear them out, in case he heard that wrong. Remus on the other hand had clenched his eyes shut as he laughed quietly in obvious merriment.

Harry was strongly reminded of a poster featuring three chimpanzees.

Sirius looked like he had an epiphany. "Ohhhh, so that's what you mean with a magical black hole." Sirius smiled and nodded at Hermione. He began thinking out loud. "Wouldn't you figure brown-"

"No Padfoot!" Remus interrupted with a frightened look on his face. "You're still thinking way wrong here."

"Harry?" Gred interrupted as he walked into the private back room.

Forge followed close behind echoing, "Harry?"

They stopped in front of James.

"Harry?" Gred asked examining this slightly off impostor.

“Err... not exactly.” James said as he looked around for help.

Forge just now noticed a slightly more proper looking Potter. “Harry?”

Harry nodded. “Hey Forge. Hey Gred.”

“Harry!” they both echoed cheerfully. Gred and Forge exchanged a look and then compared the two similar looking young men. “Err... Harry?” Gred asked hopefully as he looked at Harry.

Harry smiled. “Gred and Forge Weasley, may I present to you, Mr. Prongs.” Harry pointed over towards Tonks. “And you may remember Mr. Padfoot.”

“Hey guys,” Sirius welcomed nonchalantly.

Gred and Forge gasped and looked at each other. “Oh Harry.” Prongs and Padfoot were here. At one of their stores. The twins’ looks of astonishment gave way to confusion and then reluctant acceptance. Forge sounded like he really didn’t want to ask but knew he had to. “Harry?”

Harry made a face all his friends knew quite well. It usually coincided with rising prices on lime and shovels. “Whoops?”

Gred and Forge just got somber looks on their faces. They slung their arms over each others’ shoulders and walked themselves right out of the room. They just sighed and shook their heads in disbelief, “Harry, Harry, Harry.” Just as they were leaving Gred spoke up, “Oh and Harry?”

“Yes, I know.” Harry replied. Gred just nodded and he and Forge disappeared back towards the store.

James waved weakly to the departing hosts of a sort. He turned to his son. “I like those two.”

“I had a feeling you would get along,” Harry dryly added. “So, I figured we can all hit Gringotts, and then from there maybe divide and conquer?”

"You trying to ditch us?" Hermione asked bluntly.

"I would never!" Harry defended.

"Hah!" Tonks, Hermione, Ginny, and Remus all scoffed in unison.

James shrugged. "I barely know you, and you couldn't have even paid me to believe that."

Harry was wondering why he tried. "I know there's going to be some people who may not want to spend three hours in Quality Quidditch Supplies, and others that will foolishly want to waste time in a bookstore-

Hermione's ire rose rapidly. You could insult her all you want, but heaven help the man who insults books in her presence. "I hate you, Harry Potter."

"Repressed sexual tension?" Sirius asked James with a smile.

James looked at Remus and asked, "And she's the one who's not dating him?"

Remus shrugged. "You've seen how long she's been his best friend. It's probably not a question of 'if' as much as it is 'when' and 'how often.'"

"Harry?" Luna asked. "Why don't you just tell us where you don't want to go shopping, so we can sympathize with you but then make you go anyway?"

Harry shrugged. "These two need wardrobes, so I figured we could just get them measured and then some of us could hit the Quidditch shop or Ollivanders' while you girls do all your secret squealing and giggling and pick out clothes for them."

Luna narrowed her eyes at Tonks. "Who told him about the secret squealing?" Tonks shook her head viciously in the negative but was pointing at Hermione whenever Hermione's back was turned.

"You know, you could use some new clothes too," Ginny pointed out dangerously while staring at Harry. She turned and smiled to Bessie. "I think Harry should join us at Madam Malkins' in particular."

"I think that's a wonderful idea." Lily agreed now that she had some estrogen support around her. "Harry, honey, I think it's been way too long since I last got to choose some outfits that make you look adorable. You're getting new clothes too."

"Oh come on," Harry whined. "I hate clothes shopping. No one ever enjoys clothes shopping. Here I'll prove it. Who here hates clothes shopping?" Sirius, Remus, James, and Harry all raised their hands. "And who here has a penis, and likes clothes shopping?" Harry asked. Luna paused and considered raising her hand, before realizing she really didn't have an opinion either way on clothes shopping. Harry crowed, "See! No one! No one ever likes clothes shopping."

Harry was pouting to himself and got so absorbed in the unfairness of it all that he never even saw the conjured rubber ball streaking through the air at him. "Oww! Dammit Bessie," Harry sternly warned. "That was your free one. I hoped you liked it because there's not going to be another."

"Oh, you think so?" Lily said with a grin as she kept faking as though she was about to draw her wand.

"Err, Bessie?" Tonks cautioned. "You might want to trust Harry on this one. He can get a bit overzealous when it comes to whipping it out and measuring the size of his ego."

Lily could only arch an eyebrow at the imagery in Tonks' description.

Remus was smiling and said, "Hey Tonks? You do realize that's Harry's mum you're talking to, right?"

Tonks blushed. "Sorry there Mrs. P. I forgot, though I kept wondering why I thought your eyes were so sexy."

Now Lily was blushing, "It's okay, I can certainly understand the confusion. And please call me, Bessie."

"Bessie," Tonks said with a smile. "Yeah, I fear for your confusion, having a son and husband that could pass for twins. That's a couple ticks past eerie and straight up creepy."

"Aww Nymphie!" Sirius jeered. "Like you haven't turned into anyone's mother at just the right time."

Tonks shrugged. "And that's one. I'm going to keep count."

"Nymphie?" Sirius asked with a pout.

"Two." Tonks stated with a calm but dangerous air.

"Well," Luna reminded everyone. "Harry hates clothes shopping, which we will make him do, and we should probably get going. I got dibs on Bessie's assistant."

Tonks immediately hooked an arm around Sirius and looked at him innocently. "Mr. Padfoot, you're with me."

Sirius paled at the implications while Tonks waggled two fingers in the air, reminding him of her current count.

Ginny stepped forward and curtsied. "Mr. Prongs, please allow me to be your shopping assistant for the day."

"Ohh damn," James grinned lecherously. "Another redhead." He quickly ducked a swipe he expected to come from his wife, but Lily just shook her head and left him looking foolish.

"Mr. Ickle-Boy-Who-Lived," Hermione growled. "I think you need some new dress robes. And no conjuring."

Lily turned to Luna, "How come she's the one with Harry?"

"She's the only one not publicly dating Harry," Luna explained. "And besides she's got tenure."

“Oh,” Lily said.

“And a nargle infested-”

“Luna!” Hermione interrupted the serene blonde. “We went over this. You cannot go around claiming that until you reveal your source.”

Luna shook her head. “Sorry Hermione. But Ronald wants to remain anonymous, and I won’t violate his privacy.”

Lily looked at her blonde shopping assistant. “I think I like you. You keep things interesting.”

“Thank you Bessie, but I’m not as easy as Tonks,” Luna explained. “It takes more than sexy eyes to win me over.”

Lily’s smile faltered for a moment.

“But that doesn’t mean you shouldn’t try.” Luna reaffirmed.

“If you’re all done hitting on my mum,” Harry added loudly. “Let’s go to Gringotts.”

The large group of nine headed on out the door. Harry, James, Lily, and Sirius were all being escorted by their respective shopping assistants of Hermione, Ginny, Luna, and Tonks, while Remus was for the first time grateful for that horrendous shopping the twins had put him through. Of course if he needed any outfit in purple alligator skin, he was covered.

As soon as they walked in the door, there waiting and bowing formally was a goblin. “Mr. Potter.”

“Crackhead, are you trying to embarrass me?” Harry asked.

“I would never, Lord Potter.”

“Right,” Harry agreed dryly. “We need to take the whole extended family down to the vaults.”

“Certainly,” Crackhead said with a wicked grin. “Griphook!” he bellowed significantly louder than he needed to.

Griphook, who was already waiting a couple feet behind Crackhead, just grimaced when his name was yelled. “Sir?”

“Mr. Potter and his guests,” Crackhead explained. “Need to visit several of his vaults, primarily the heirloom ones. Make sure and use the privileged pureblood cart, Griphook.”

“Of course, sir,” Griphook grinned. “After all, it’s what it there for.”

Harry smiled brightly. “Crackhead, I’m good for Tuesday and I got these two knuckleheads joining me.”

“Excellent,” Crackhead applauded. “And you should know the centaurs have seen the stars pushed past two in Madrid. But nothing will prevent the arsenal’s fall.”

“I’ll keep that in mind,” Harry said with a smile. “Good day.”

Sirius scrambled over towards Harry, “Err Harry! I’ve certainly never heard of a privileged pureblood cart. They may be planning to kill us.”

Harry slapped Sirius’ across the face. “Snap out of it man. The war is over!”

Sirius rubbed his cheek in shock. “The hell was that for?”

Harry smiled widely. “Saw it in a movie once. Thought it looked like fun.” Harry nodded. “It was.”

Sirius seemed to think that point could be contended.

“And the ‘privileged pureblood cart’ was a little something I helped the goblins with. The others are too small and only offer a single speed.” Harry explained as they all went back and saw a series of attached palatial looking carts. They were soft crimson velvet with gold trim all

around the edges. As they all piled in three to a row, Griphook hopped into the back conducting cart.

Harry had them all lift their hands up and bars magically appeared and rolled forward to lock them into their seats. "As you can see, the filthy subhuman creature is now out of our sight, and it is only rich opulence for the privileged purebloods. Many wealthy older families may have only subtly agreed with Voldemort and provided him with perfectly legal assistance. This helps to determine just how privileged a pureblood is. And trust me, keep your hands inside the cart."

And with that the cart started to slowly move forward. Harry added, "It's also because, the older vaults take longer to reach, so this cuts down on the time necessary." And as soon as they were out of sight, and still just slowly picking up speed, the entire ground fell out from under them and the privileged pureblood cart began a free fall down into the earth.

No matter if they were scared out of their minds, or having the time of their life, all riders including Griphook, were screaming their heads off. After just a few hundred feet, the privileged pureblood cart magically reattached to a track and began screaming downhill at an almost sixty degree angle. The track was doing loop de loops, flipping upside down and sideways even more than it was right side up. Moony, having done this with the twins before, impressed Sirius and Tonks in his row, by spitting forward and catching it again in his mouth.

Sirius not one to turn down a challenge, ending up spitting in his own face three times and on Tonks once before admitting defeat.

At one point during their upside down ride James looked down and saw a more traditional cart ride pass below them at a much more sedate pace. He had a weird moment where he just locked eyes with the couple below them before he'd disappeared through the other side of his own cart ride.

The woman looked at her husband while she held onto her hat at the brisk pace they maintained racing through the caverns. She asked the goblin next to her, "Was that... was that the privileged pureblood cart?"

The goblin nodded. "Yes, we reserve those carts for a very specific class of clientele."

The husband asked, "Did it... did it smell like urine?"

The goblin nodded again. "That's one of the far more frequent genetic predispositions of purebloods. They're quite prone to wetting themselves."

The woman and her husband seemed to think this made a lot of sense.

The privileged pureblood cart finally came to a stop in front of the Potter family vault.

"Man I love that thing!" Harry screamed.

Luna hopped out of the cart as though she was merely standing up from a chair, but everyone else was extremely wobbly as they piled out of their cushy seats.

"Aww," Harry moaned. "I thought maybe someone would blow chunks."

Hermione did not look happy with her assigned shopping partner, but most of the others had goofy grins from the unexpected roller coaster ride.

Harry opened up the vault doors and granted everyone access. Lily and James headed right back into their stuff, while several others followed.

Remus was trying to think of other places you sneak a roller coaster onto a person. He thought the bottom step of getting off the Knight Bus might be considered cruel and unusual. And as much fun as it might be to put one in Severus' shower, he somewhat feared how long it would be before that one was discovered. He suddenly remembered something from earlier, "Hey Harry?"

Harry, waiting outside the vault asked, "Yeah?"

"Earlier when Crackhead gave you that prophecy warning thing from the centaurs? Should I be worried?" Remus asked.

Harry chuckled. "No, not at all. He was just sharing a little secret with me. It's sort of a tradition before a poker game to go ahead and put the fix on a muggle sporting event. He was telling me the line on a football match got pushed up to two, but that I can make even more betting outright for Arsenal to lose. Gives us all a way to ensure we're playing poker with someone else's money. As well as do our part to steal a little back from organized crime."

Remus was appalled. "They can do that? Just put the fix in on muggles?"

Harry nodded. "Piece of cake. If you want, come February, when the Oscars roll around, we can clean house. Long odds all over the place."

"Yeah," Remus nodded. "That'd be great. Wait! Hang on... doesn't that actually perpetuate and, since you're all criminals too, then in fact add to organized crime?"

"No," Harry said as though it was the most obvious thing in the world. "We're not organized at all."

Remus looked relieved. "Well in that case, it's okay."

"Exactly," Harry nodded fervently. "Don't think too much. It's dangerous."

The group loaded up on a number of things from the Potter family vault and then the Black family vault. Griphook seemed to enjoy trying to make the ride as uncomfortable as possible.

It was a nauseous group that finally made it back to the lobby of Gringotts.

“Gringotts is fun!” Sirius happily exclaimed and drew a number of odd looks from irritated people waiting in line for a teller. “That privileged pureblood cart is ruddy brilliant. Because the stuffy ponces wouldn’t ever want the common man to think they are anything but privileged purebloods.”

Griphook grinned and whispered to Sirius, “I’ll see if I can get a highlight film put together for poker night. The first time the Parkinson’s rode it, they all cried. Bawled like babies and kissed the dirty stone floor. They haven’t visited their vault since. It seems tellers suffice for many valued clients these days.”

Sirius smiled at a potential goblin partner in crime. “You are naughty.”

Griphook made a hasty exit.

As the group was leaving Crackhead again greeted them, and wished them well for the rest of the day. Just as Harry turned to leave, Crackhead added, “Oh and Mr. Potter, you should know we’ve added you to the wards now. So apparition won’t cause you any more complications.”

“What?” Harry whined. “No! You can’t do that. That’s not fair to the other clients.”

“You wish to dictate Gringotts’ policy yourself?” Crackhead asked formally.

“But I could just apparate into anyone’s vault now,” Harry argued.

“Are you implying you couldn’t have before? That we have protections that can keep you out?”

Harry paused. “Well, no, but you might someday soon. You don’t want to just hand me the keys to the castle.”

“My apologies, Mr. Potter, but tough noogies. Your actions are still being recorded just the alarms aren’t raised.” Crackhead stated seriously. “That is the official goblin position on the matter.”

Harry sighed. "You're no fun. Now I'll just have to trip the alarms intentionally."

Crackhead's eyes widened. Apparently he assumed this would prevent further false alarms. Not to mention the additional leverage Harry would have now.

Harry smiled to see he was still going to be able to annoy Crackhead easily. "Later Crackhead. We'll see you Tuesday if not sooner."

Crackhead tiredly and still slightly shocked said, "Good day, Mr. Potter." He addressed all the others. "And you as well as his guests are welcome to the privileges Mr. Potter has made available to each of you should you return."

The fresh air was welcomed as was the bright sunlight when they were finally in the Alley. After some discussion where Harry thought they should go to Ollivander's first, but several of the girls felt they should get Madam Malkin's out of the way, they finally reached a compromise. They would go to Madam Malkin's first, and Harry would shut the hell up.

It was over forty five minutes later that the guys had given up and were playing dress up dolls for the girls' tastes. Everyone had more outfits than any human could possibly need for the rest of their natural life. And the girls seemed to think they just had the fall clothes out of the way. Some pleading, some concessions, and an impressive holographic display of the three men left behind to try on future outfits, and the men managed to escape their own private hell.

Harry, Sirius, James, and Remus left the five girls and the Harry, James, and Sirius magical stand-ins behind and decided to hit Ollivander's. James and Lily's wands needed some polish in the worst way, and Sirius was going to try and get properly fitted for a new wand.

James was the first one to walk-in as the bell tinkled announcing customers entering. As the group piled in, Mr. Ollivander snuck up behind James and was observing him closely.

Ollivander surprised him by saying loudly, "Mr. Potter, mahogany eleven inches, excellent for transfiguration. I trust your wand is..." Ollivander stopped speechless, looked over at a clock on the wall, and then at the calendar next to it. The normally composed old man just blurted out hysterically, "What the hell are you doing alive?"

"Shh! Shh! Shhhhhh!" Harry frantically shushed Mr. Ollivander as he tried to make sure no one else was around.

"Oh, it's you," Mr. Ollivander said looking right at Harry. He looked over and saw Remus Lupin and standing next to him was undoubtedly Sirius Black. Mr. Ollivander shook his head in disappointment at Harry. "I always knew you would do terrible things. Great yes, but terrible."

"That's not what you said!" Harry cried out indignantly. "That was your spiel about Voldemort when I was eleven."

Mr. Ollivander rolled his eyes. "Po-tay-toe, po-tah-toe. Now, what can I do for you?"

Harry frowned, unsure if he was just called a Dark Lord or not. "You can start by not mentioning anything about the people with me."

"You think you're going to keep something like this a secret?" Mr. Ollivander asked with a raised eyebrow. "Really?"

Harry grumbled at the lack of faith people had in him. Or rather the sort of faith people had in him. "Padfoot here would like to get fitted for a new wand. And there are two other wands that have been sitting unused for twenty years and need some polish."

Mr. Ollivander looked at Harry resignedly. "So you do have a matching pet Mum too?"

Remus chuckled though James wasn't too crazy about the old man's tone.

"Hey now," Harry defended. "There was an accident. They will be going back most likely once we figure out how to fix this. No need to

be snippy here.” Harry continued off-handedly, “You know, personally, I’d think you’d be a lot nicer, to the world’s only supplier of Dementor-based wand core parts. Did you know in many branches of magic they’re stronger than phoenix feathers? But I suppose I could try and set up my own wand-making business.”

“No, no.” Mr. Ollivander pleaded. “That’s quite alright. I’ll be nice. Please don’t experiment in wand design. This is the only planet Earth we have. There’s no do-overs on it.”

“I disagree,” James said with a grin. “I think I’ve gotten a do-over here.”

“Yes that is true,” Mr. Ollivander agreed. He shook his head. “I always figured there would be an Ollivander’s until the end of time. I just didn’t think that would happen in my lifetime.”

“Oh fine,” Harry conceded. “I won’t do any more work in wand design.”

“Oh dear.”

Harry frowned. “I had to do some to find out if the Dementor pieces were usable wand core materials. Took me a while to get them working, but they only worked after being soaked in a solution of Dementor Blood.”

“How... peculiar,” Mr. Ollivander said with an arched eyebrow.

Harry rolled his eyes. “Do you practice being eerie and creepy or does it just come naturally?”

Mr. Ollivander dropped the façade for a moment and shrugged. “Keeps the kids from asking too many questions. And it was either creepy and eerie or acting like a smug asshole.”

“That’s why Snivelly does it?” Sirius asked in a moment of realization.

“That’s not acting.” Mr. Ollivander shook his head. “Alright Mr. Bla... excuse me, Padfoot. You still favor your right arm?”

Sirius nodded, and then giggled as the tape measures flew around hitting him in ticklish areas. The process of wand hunting took another twenty minutes, and Harry got Mr. Ollivander's assurance he would say nothing about who was here, and Harry was going to set him up with some wand core materials for experimentation. Now that the men all had their wands in hand and some fresh polish they were all set.

"Careful where you point that thing Padfoot," Remus warned.

"I think it's excited," Sirius grinned.

"What now?" James asked.

"Now," Harry explained. "We're heading toward Quality Quidditch, where we are to kill time until the ladies finish up and meet us there."

"Sweet!" James said. "I can get Lily's official original outfit there. They may have to special order it."

The four men entered Quality Quidditch and James went towards the counter while Harry, Sirius, and Remus went to check out the latest brooms.

"Still got that Firebolt, Harry?" Sirius asked. "Or did you need it to close a portal to Heaven?"

"Why would I want to close a portal to Heaven?" Harry asked.

Sirius rolled his eyes. "So the virgins here on earth don't escape."

Harry nodded thinking that did make sense. "And yes I still have the Firebolt, though I rarely use it. I've been through a few other brooms since then, and I didn't really want to risk it."

"Why not?" Sirius asked. "It's a broom. That's what it's for."

Harry shrugged. "It has sentimental value to me, and well, brooms don't usually last me too long. Probably should get a six pack or two while I'm here."

"A six pack?" Sirius asked.

Remus nodded. "He buys brooms in bulk because he keeps crashing them."

"I do not crash them," Harry whined. "They just die on me."

"Or explode." Remus added.

"Yeah that too," Harry agreed.

Sirius looked at Harry impressed. "How the hell do you manage that?"

Harry shrugged. "It's these shoddy broom makers not me."

Remus explained to Sirius. "They make the brooms capable of withstanding anything a wizard or witch can do to them. Considering our young calamitous friend's tendencies, it shouldn't really surprise you that something like that doesn't stop him."

Harry frowned. "I admit I am slightly prone to over-exerting them and pushing a broom past its limits. But what's the point of flying if not to go faster?"

Sirius grinned. "I hope that attitude doesn't extend to the bedroom."

Harry was going to insult his godfather when Luna interrupted, "It doesn't. He is much more careful about how much he pushes his broomstick in there. And the explosions are much more fun."

Sirius and Remus chuckled at Harry's frustrated blush.

While Sirius was enjoying his new wand, and discussion about Harry's broomstick, James went up to the counter and asked the man there. "Excuse me?"

“Oh, Mr. Potter!” the man behind counter cheerfully greeted. “Back for more already?”

“To be honest, I didn’t think I’d be back at all.” James snidely replied.

The man behind the counter’s grin faltered and he looked closer at James. “Wait... you’re not Mr. Potter. But you’re a spitting image of him if I’ve ever seen one.”

James shrugged. “I came in here with him actually. You could call me his good twin, since he’s obviously the evil one. My name is Prongs.”

The man noticed Mr. Potter was in the store now and was looking at the brooms. “Nice to meet you Prongs. I’m Jeb. Now what can I do for you?”

“Well,” James smiled, “Jeb, I have recently come up on the winning end of a lovely bet and need to procure an outfit for my little lady.”

Jeb nodded in understanding. “Ahh yes. I remember I used to make my wife put on the pads and dress up like one of the boys sometimes too. Don’t worry son, in my book, it’s not gay at all.”

“Err, wow,” James said. “And umm... not exactly what I had in mind. I was hoping to get a replica of the original outfit worn by the inaugural Puddlemere United Superfan Sisters of Yesteryear.”

“Ahhh,” Jeb said. “That we can do. We’ll have to special order it though, as we don’t keep them in stock. They are pretty expensive, I’m just warning you.”

James nodded. “Only the best for my Bessie.”

“Bessie, did you say?” an older gentleman asked as he overheard.

James turned to him and briefly thought it was the Headmaster. “Yes sir. Bessie means the world to me. I’ve loved her for years.”

“Really?” the older man said with a pleased smile. “Would you and Bessie like to come over and have dinner with me this evening? You could meet my Lulu.”

“Someone say my name?” Lily said as she walked up and hugged her husband.

“And you are?” The older man asked curiously.

“I’m Bessie.” Lily explained with a grin.

The old man sagged. “Oh. Nevermind.” He grabbed his purchases and left the store.

James turned to Jeb with a questioning look.

Jeb shook his head. “Aberforth is an odd one. All he ever buys are bludgers. He says he does it to keep them off the streets.”

Lily looked at her husband. “Well we finished with your clothes shopping.”

James grinned. “And we’re just about finished with yours, honey. Right, Jeb?”

Jeb nodded. “Yup. Order may take a few days. I’ll owl you when it comes in.”

“You can just owl me, Jeb.” Harry said as he walked up to the counter. “I’ll go ahead and pay for it now, if you like. And I’d like a dozen of the latest today. Got a few friends and don’t want to run out.”

Jeb’s eyes lit up like galleons. “Right on it, Mr. Potter.” And he hurried back to get the brooms together.

James and Lily turned towards the motley group that was shopping here with them. “A dozen what exactly?”

“Brooms,” Sirius answered. “He usually gets at least a six-pack.”

"A celebrity like you? I'd think you'd be able to get brooms for free just so the manufacturers would be able to say you use theirs." James pointed out.

Remus chuckled. "Harry offered the first company to make one durable enough for him would get his endorsement."

"Oh yeah?" Lily asked interested.

Ginny shook her head. "I don't think they're even trying anymore."

"Oh," Lily said dejectedly, before looking over at Harry. "Your flying is going to make me nervous, isn't it?"

Hermione assured her. "It terrified me during school, but you stop worrying when you realize there's a madness to his method."

Lily corrected her, "Don't you mean, a method to his-"

Hermione interrupted shaking her head. "No. I said it right."

Jeb came back to the front with several shrunken wrapped packages. "Here you go, Mr. Potter. And I will owl you as soon as the order comes in."

"Great Jeb," Harry said taking his brooms and tapping his wand to verify his vault withdrawal. "Thanks a bunch. We'll see you later."

The group made their way out of Quality Quidditch and headed over towards Florean Fortescue's to get some ice cream. They all got their own flavor. Harry declined his mum's offer of a taste, like everyone else who left her to her own lettuce flavored ice cream. She was clearly still adjusting to her bovine side, but liked the dairy products at least. Sirius ordered cheeseburger flavored ice cream just to annoy her, but at least he was forced to eat it all and pretend to like it.

James asked a question, that had been bugging him for a while now. "How come everyone knows you are, but you're not having to beat off rabid fans or whatever? The way I hear it, I'd think you wouldn't get any peace in public like this."

Harry smiled. "It's a little obscuration charm, so that only those who need to find me, know I'm here. If I address them it's gone, or if they know me, it doesn't affect them. I wouldn't be able to walk the Alley like this otherwise."

Lily nodded having figured as much.

Harry asked, "Is there anywhere else we need to go here? I thought we'd put off the motorcycles and hit the muggle side of things later, but was there anywhere else you all wanted to go?"

Sirius carefully replied. "Umm... anyone mind if I swing by Borgin and Burkes on our way back?"

Harry smiled brightly, while Lily wanted to scold Sirius. "Sorry Padfoot, that one may be a bit difficult."

"Oh?" Sirius asked. "The Ministry finally find a way to shut them down?"

Remus chuckled and Harry shook his head. "Nope, they were too sneaky for that. But Mr. Borgin was forced to sell when he came down with a slight case of... incineration."

"Ouch," James said. "That doesn't sound pleasant."

Remus nodded. "There was a bit of a bidding war from many of the so-called darker elements due to rumors about a few secret stashes. Luckily, Meg here is now the proud owner of that property."

"Oh yeah?" Sirius asked. "Still carry those mature titles of pensieve memories?"

"Padfoot!" Lily scolded. "You promised me you were done with those!"

"I was!" Sirius grinned. "But we all got do-overs. All those secrets we promised to hold to our deaths. I mean I could never tell you that Prongs used to hook up with the deer in the Forbidden Forest before now either."

“Padfoot!” James gulped.

“Prongs!” Lily hissed.

“Bessie!” Luna cheered.

“Err, right,” Harry said. “And no, Padfoot. The store is gone, and I came up with a particularly brilliant replacement, if I do say so myself.”

Hermione groaned which seemed to add to Harry’s amusement.

“Why?” Sirius asked. “What’s there now?”

“If we’re all done, why don’t we go check it out?” Harry happily asked.

Remus was chuckling, while Hermione’s eyes seemed to roll and sigh on their own.

“I even got to pick their slogan,” Harry said as he thrust his arm in the air with a flourish towards the darker Alley.

They came up to the youth shelter entitled Knockturn Alley Mission. Below the sign was its slogan “Dare to Dream.”

“I don’t get it,” Sirius stated.

Tonks laughed, “Doesn’t mean you never did.”

Remus chuckled and told Sirius to say the name slower.

Lily was covering her face with her hand. “Oh, Harry,” She was struggling not to giggle like her husband was. “That’s horrible.”

“What?” Harry defended despite the amusement on his face. “It’s for the kids!”

CHAPTER EIGHT

“Knockturn Alley Mission? Dare to Dream?” Ginny was confused. “Am I the only person who doesn’t get the joke?”

Hermione was biting her bottom lip. Her lack of scolding Harry was a clear indication she didn’t get it either. Of course, Hermione would never admit it quite that plainly. She was merely filing it away to research later. She mentally marked it for discovery, second in queue behind that odd pointing towards Harry’s mum and the house where the former Minister lived. Apparently everyone else laughed when they sang, “And around the corner, Fudge was made.”

Sirius grinned widely at Ginny’s confused look. “You may be too young and impressionable for this sort of grown-up talk.”

Harry saw the confusion on Hermione’s face and said, “Go on and explain it to her, Hermione.”

Hermione shrieked and snarled. “Dammit Potter, you’re so immature!”

Sirius turned to Lily, “That’s a fair impression of you she’s doing.”

Lily saw the genuine frustration and anger on Hermione’s face. “Moony? You sure she’s not dating my son?”

Hermione closed her eyes and found her happy place. She was letting the anger wash away with the tide.

“Alright, so I’m not alone here. Hermione’s as clueless as me.” Ginny said.

Hermione’s tides were bringing it all right back at her. She angrily bit out, “Oh come on, Ginny. This is Harry. You know it’s stupid, you know it’s childish, and you know it’s probably related to a bodily function. Do you really need to know whatever insidious little joke or cheesy pun he’s made?”

Sirius interrupted and smiled. "Prongs, help me out here. I'll start: Knockturn All-"

"-ey Mission!" James cheerfully finished. He slung an arm over Padfoot's shoulders and they looked towards the sky. In unison they whispered into the wind, "Dare... to dream."

Sirius wiped a tear from his eye. "Those lucky kids."

"Those poor sheet-changing house elves." James said as his eye too was leaking.

With a surprising pop, Dobby appeared suddenly. "Fresh sheets for you, sir." Dobby said presenting James with a matching set of king size suggestive looking Bambi sheets. Another pop and Dobby was gone. The entire exchange took less than three seconds.

James was blushing at some of the positions on his new sheets. "Is that cheeky little bugger trying to impress me?"

Sirius shrugged and was interrupted by James enthusiastic response of, "Because it's working!"

Hermione just sighed and turned to Ginny. "You see? Did you really want to know that?"

"Know what? I still don't get it." Ginny complained.

Sirius leaned over towards Ginny and whispered an explanation in her ear.

Ginny was listening intently, though the moment of realization was obvious as the dreaded Weasley blush was a known incurable disease. The Weasley mouth working independently of the brain was unproven, but Ginny was making a case for it when she blurted out, "That happens to guys too?"

While this greatly amused everyone else and even had a stern Hermione giggling it was not healthy for poor Ginny. She was paling

in fright, blushing in embarrassment, and sweating in some personal areas. She meekly begged, "Harry," she gulped. "Help."

Always a gentleman, Harry quickly hit Ginny in the abdomen with a stunner, knocking her unconscious and then catching her before she hit the ground. He threw her over his shoulder and was going to carry her the rest of the way back.

Lily was not expecting that and scolded, "Harry!"

"What?" Harry asked before recognizing the look on his Mum's face. "Oh no. We've got the numbers on her and that tidbit of knowledge she just let slip was way too good to not laugh at. This way she won't be embarrassed by us all laughing at her."

Sirius and Remus must have made a similar discovery as Tonks was blushing and the two oldest Marauders were happily laughing in her face.

The large group made it to the secret back room in Weasleys' Wizard Wheezes, and were frustrated when Harry and Ginny disappeared, but no one else apparently could remember where they lived.

When Harry came back down and realized he'd just popped them all in last time and never actually shared the Fidelius secret, he was tempted to hold the information hostage, particularly from the ladies. Some brief bargaining and Harry agreed to let them back up if he got to see two chicks make out. Tonks leapt at the opportunity and morphed into a duplicate Severus Snape. She jumped towards Lily with her mouth open and tongue out.

Lily was too scared to react in time. Luckily Harry kept his wits about himself and began yelling the Fidelius secret as loud as he possibly could. The secret back room had its own silencing and privacy charms thankfully, or the entire Alley probably would have heard Harry Potter repeatedly screaming, "Two boobs below and a Harry on top! Two boobs below and a Harry on top!"

"Thank you sweetie," Tonks said as she calmly morphed back into a common form, and kissed Harry on the cheek as she walked past.

She was carrying several packages and walked up the stairwell she saw appear.

Harry was now catching his breath, and taking that mental image and burying it under layers of occlumency even he couldn't break.

Harry deposited Ginny's still unconscious form onto the couch. "I think it's time I took Mum and Dad to visit the Old Man. Nobody wake Ginny till we've left."

"Why not?" Lily asked.

Harry smiled. "Well because I stunned her and it'll be a lot safer if I'm not around when she wakes up."

James grinned. "I get the feeling this isn't the first time you've stunned her."

"Of course not!" Harry insisted. "There are a lot of times it's just safer for everyone if she's unconscious. Last time I stunned her though, she sort of went into shock and wasn't too pleased."

"What happened?" Sirius asked, a little too happy for having heard someone went into shock.

Harry looked shyly at Hermione and asked, "Do you know this story?"

Hermione shook her head baffled.

"Oh well in that case," Harry began. "Here's what happened. Ginny was complaining that I never do anything romantic for her, and then I began pointing out all the romantic things about a moonlit evening. She could never see past the fact that our hair was caked with a pungent green mud and we were no longer welcome in Essex County."

"Anyone think Harry's skimming over parts in this?" Tonks asked and received affirmative nods all around and a scowl from Harry.

“Anyways, I was explaining how the stars were almost always romantic and she kept saying they weren’t tonight because it was overcast. So I thought I’d try and be a good little boyfriend and oblige her with a romantic gesture. I wrapped my arm securely around her shoulder in a hug and then apparated us a few thousand feet above the cloud line, so we could see the stars and feel that crisp cool night air on our face, as we gently descended in a free fall.”

“That was your idea of romantic?” James asked.

Harry smiled weakly. “Ginny has a completely untrue crazy idea that I did that on purpose to scare her and because she was being an argumentative bitch. I maintain it was a sincere attempt at romance that I may have misjudged Ginny on.”

“What happened?” Tonks asked with a wide grin.

“Ginny just kept screaming and freaking out. She was scratching me and kicking me, so finally I stunned her. When I woke her after that she still thought she was falling and well, let’s just say, I know I’m a bad person because it was really, really funny.”

“Anyways, me and the folks will be back a bit later. Moony, I need you to babysit Padfoot.”

“Hey!” Sirius complained.

Harry ignored him and continued on to Remus. “You can’t leave him alone with all these attractive young females.” Harry put up a hand to his mouth and stage whispered to Remus, “Prison changes a man.”

Remus nodded sagely and kept a careful eye on Sirius who was doing his best to hide his pucker.

“Alright, Albus!” an enraged Harry screamed while he hid his parents behind him. “You know you’re going down for sending that story to the Prophet.” Harry’s eyes were flaring with power. “The question remains whether you’re going down alone.”

“It was Bob!” Albus quickly pleaded. “It was all Bob’s idea. He used me. I’m as much as victim here as you are.”

“Really?” Harry asked and paused for a few seconds. “Because that’s exactly what Bob told me you would say.”

Albus looked cornered and skittish. His heart was racing and he was not prepared for someone to tap him on the shoulder. With a girlish squeak Albus fell out of his chair.

Harry’s eyes twinkled and he motioned with his hand. “And I assume you recognize my parents.”

Neither James’ nor Lily’s face betrayed any amusement at all as they saw their revered Headmaster looking as terrified as a first year. “Hello Headmaster,” Lily said in an emotionless monotone voice.

Albus’ eyes flickered back and forth between the two zombie Potters. “Lily,” he said cheerfully. His face dropped seriously, “Miss Evans.” He shook his head and corrected himself, “Mrs. Potter.” He tried with a bow of his head.

Lily just stood there impassively.

Albus weakly tried, “The Mother-Who-Lived?” He was struggling to grin while everyone else just stood there watching him oddly.

James smiled, “What about The Mother?”

Lily just closed her eyes and sighed.

Harry looked over at his father. “I bet you’re going to get smacked for that.”

James shrugged. “Probably.”

Unfortunately this byplay had the effect of calming the nervous Headmaster a fair amount.

“You may call me Bessie.” Lily permitted.

James waved lightly. “Prongs.”

“Alright,” Albus agreed. “Then I insist you call me Albus.”

Lily nodded but added, “Alright, Albus. But no promises on what I call you behind your back.”

Albus gulped.

“Bastard.”

James did his best to hide his amusement.

Albus frowned. “I’ll pretend I didn’t hear that.”

Lily raised a challenging eyebrow. “So tell me, Albus. How is senility treating you?”

Albus opened his mouth to respond and was immediately interrupted by Lily. “Is there anything you’d like to say to us, Albus?”

“Err, that depends.” Albus stalled. “What do you know?”

Lily yipped out an angry moo and hit Albus in the head with her shoe. “Arg! You complete bastard! You intentionally forced Harry into an unhappy childhood!”

Albus was going to say something in his defense but James caught Albus’ eye. James frowned and shook his head.

Lily apparently needed to vent. “You interfered in business that shouldn’t have been yours! You should not have even had a say in Harry’s future after our deaths! And the fact that you knew what his childhood was like and just left him to rot! A bloody cupboard! And you knew you’d get away with it because he had no other family that you had to answer to! You bloody bastard!”

Albus sat quietly taking his verbal thrashing.

“I certainly don’t know what crazy blood protection I may have invoked, but there had to be better options for my son!”

Albus waited a moment and began to open his mouth, but was again interrupted by Lily, who snarled, "And I'm pissed off at you for Sirius' sake too, you bastard!"

Albus looked at Harry accusingly. "I didn't kill Sirius."

Harry frowned but let his mum do all the yelling.

"That's not what I'm talking about, you manipulative bastard! Even if you were bloody stupid enough to honestly believe Sirius guilty, there were enough bloody questions about that bloody night that maybe just once in a bloody decade you should have talked to him! If you just had you would have realized that you were standing by and letting a good man rot in prison, when he should have been caring for and raising his godson, you god damn bloody bastard!"

James looked over at Harry. He whispered a question. "Did she just call Sirius a 'good man'?" When he got hit in the head with Lily's other shoe, James wisely kept quiet.

"Now, I'm out of shoes, so you better not piss me off any further!" Lily shrieked towards everyone in the room.

Three quick fire flashes and Fawkes had returned the footwear to the angry mother.

It took nearly all of James willpower to not blurt out loud, 'It's The Mother reloaded!'

"So tell me, old man," Lily snarled. "Why shouldn't I just kill you for harming my son? I'm already dead and doubt even the Wizengamot would blame me."

"Err," Albus stammered and looked to James for help. James just crossed his arms and seemed to want an answer from the Headmaster.

Lily's eyes were glittering dangerously. "Can you look me in the eye and honestly tell me any mistakes you made were just that, mistakes? And you always had the best of intentions for my son?"

Albus gulped and nodded. "Yes."

"Harry," Lily yelled a little more calmly but still seemed unable to control her voice. "Have you forgiven Albus' transgressions despite the obvious trauma and emotional scarring that he is at the root of?"

Harry stared impassively at the Headmaster and raised an eyebrow. Albus' pleading frightened look seemed like all the answer he needed. "Yeah, we're cool."

Lily calmed significantly and sat down in a chair in front of the Headmaster's desk and smiled. "Lovely. You look healthy, Albus. How are you doing?"

James sat down next to his wife and took her hand, both to calm her down and perhaps preemptively block her from smacking him.

Albus was startled by the complete change in demeanor and suddenly pleasant conversation. "I'm... err... I'm doing okay."

"Oh, I'm sorry I yelled at you there, Albus," Lily softly apologized.

Albus meekly nodded in acceptance. "So you don't blame me?"

Lily pursed her lips. "I most certainly do. But you didn't wish him harm, he ended up okay, and he doesn't blame you, so at least not all of my ire is deserved. But I still blame you."

"Umm... okay." Albus said uncertainly. "So what now?"

"Now," Lily smirked. "You tell me all the trouble my son got into and missed out on punishment because he had no caring guardians."

"Hey now!" Harry indignantly yelped. "That's not fair."

"Oh hush, Harry," Lily insisted. "It's not like I'm going to ground you. You're older than I am, and I'm living in one of your apartments."

"Well," Harry was stalling. "Well... maybe I do blame Albus. Maybe we're being a bit hasty in just buying his claims of good intentions."

Albus' eyes were twinkling happily at Harry.

"Maybe he's really the ultra manipulative Dark Lord behind everything!" Harry theorized.

Fawkes squawked and swatted Harry for the indirect insult on her.

Harry saw the determination in Fawkes' eye that reminded him of the look she gave the basilisk just before gouging its eyes out. "Oh fine." Harry grumbled.

"Relax, Harry," Lily explained. "We're just a decade or so late for our Parent-Headmaster conference."

Harry began mumbling to himself and just sat there petting Fawkes on the back of her neck. He was trying to find the spot that made her twitch her leg.

"So tell me, Albus," Lily smiled and began. "I'm sure Snivellus was a right arse, but was my son a problem student in any of his classes that matter?"

Harry grinned thinking maybe this wouldn't be too bad.

Albus considered the futility of trying to defend Severus and instead elected to just explain, "Well, first year he killed my DADA professor."

"Oi!" Harry reacted. "Not my fault! Not my fault, at all, you barmy old codger! You're the one who hired the Death Eater with Voldemort living in the back of his head!"

"Sorry." Albus shrugged. "But you still killed him."

"Yeah he did," James giggled. "We saw that memory already. Bloody exciting."

Lily frowned unable to distance herself from the fact that that had been her baby. "You might want to reevaluate your interview procedure, considering a Voldemort-possessed Death Eater was the right man for the job."

Albus frowned a bit wondering how much they knew about Harry's other DADA professors.

James nodded and asked. "So what sort punishment are you giving these days for killing staff members?"

Albus actually blushed and bowed his head. "I awarded him enough points to ensure Gryffindor would win the House cup."

"Albus! He was in serious danger!" Lily scolded. "You were encouraging him! And dirtying the good name of the points system!"

"The points system?" Albus looked at Harry and James briefly. "Didn't Harry mention who's been teaching Potions?"

"That's right!" James remembered. "Cripes Harry! You could have won the House Cup by a mile if you'd just killed your Potions professor too!"

Harry rolled his eyes. "You two are worse than Sirius. Honestly, Severus isn't that bad. He cured Frank and Alice just like a year or so ago!"

James raised an eyebrow. "And dog shit makes the soil more fertile." James shrugged. "So what?"

"Be fair, James," Lily surprisingly pleaded. "It has been a long time since we saw him. He might have changed." She turned to address her son. "You should understand, Harry, when we knew him, he was truly horrible towards pretty much everyone who wasn't a Slytherin. He was mean, petty, as rude as he could possibly be, he took a sick pleasure in other people's pain, and he really had a deep-seated

irrational hatred of your father. But if you say he's grown-up and changed..."

Harry looked at Albus who was wearing that sort of guilty smile you get after filling your diaper.

Harry winced and weakly smiled. "Well, okay... maybe changed is too strong a term."

"Oh Harry," James sighed sadly and frowned. "Do you hate the mudbloods too?"

"What?" Harry was unprepared for that one. "No, not at all. I love mudbloods. Some of them with regularity."

Albus frowned. "Would you stop using that term, please!"

Harry frowned confused. "Have you not countered the constipation curse on your chair?"

Albus jumped out of his seat examining his chair with his mage senses, looking to see if that curse had been put back on it.

Lily added in helpfully, "I think he meant the term mudblood, Harry, not regularity."

"Oh... oh yeah." Harry agreed. "Albus hates the word mudblood. Even more than pussywillow."

"Ack!" Albus yelped. "Stop saying that one too!"

Lily and James just looked at their odd Headmaster. After a few moments of silence Lily just said, "Pussywillow."

Albus huffed petulantly. After settling himself sufficiently, he added, "I'll admit Severus is not the most likeable person." Albus ignored the three identical snorts. "But even if you'll never agree he is a good man, you can at least recognize and acknowledge the good things he has done."

Lily nodded. "Hitler was a vegetarian."

Albus did his best not to draw the comparison Lily may have implied. "An unrelated observation, but I think only most cows and chickens would consider that a truly good thing."

Lily's eyes lit up and she snarled, "You carnivores on the other hand have been slaughtering and eating my brethren!"

Albus looked at Harry. "Bessie is a... Bessie?"

Harry nodded. "And you know, now that you mention it, I could go for a juicy steak tonight. I know this great muggle steakhouse..."

James' eyes perked up. "How's the veal?"

Before Harry could even respond, Lily had backhanded her husband hard enough to knock his chair straight back. There was a loud crack when his skull hit the stone floor behind him. He moaned, "Awww... Godric dammit."

Albus sighed quietly. "He still does that?"

Lily just nodded sadly.

"Praise be to Harry that it never caught on." Albus replied with a twinkle in his eye.

Harry frowned harshly. "That's not right, man. That's just not right."

Albus grinned unabashedly. "Moving on, in his second year, your son helped steal an enchanted car, flew that to Hogwarts, in front of some Muggles, and crashed it into the Whomping Willow."

"Harry!" Lily scolded, beginning to notice a pattern forming.

Harry was sagging in his chair a bit. "You know, the way Albus explains things, makes them sound a lot worse than they really are."

James laughed. "Well that one sounds pretty fricking sweet to be honest!"

Harry watched his Mum smile and shrug. "Okay that one kind of does. I hope this year you managed to keep from killing your DADA professor."

Albus had a smile chock full of mirth. "No, this one just had his mind completely wiped out."

"He's the one you watched Obliviate himself?" James asked.

Harry nodded and pointed out, "Hey, you know we could cure him too now."

"Harry," Albus slowly responded. "I'm going to completely forget you ever said anything just now, and I would advise you to do the same."

Harry realizing his error, nodded eagerly, and made a motion of zipping his lips.

"So was the obliviation accidental or did he catch Filch in his skivvies or something?" James inquired.

Harry shook his head and crossed his eyes in a vain attempt to keep the mental image blurry. "Accidental. He was a fraud and tried to Obliviate me and Ron. Luckily for us he used Ron's broken wand and fried his own brain."

Lily frowned slightly. "Did any of your DADA teachers escape unscathed?"

"Nicholas is a bit barmy, but at his age I don't think I can take all the blame for that one." Harry continued ignoring the strangled gulping sounds Albus was making. "Delores still goes into convulsions any time she hears hooves clopping or the quiet sounds of Hermione with her arm up begging to be called on. Moody never really taught as he was held captive all year. Although Albus, I'm sure, could explain it in a way where it would sound like it was my fault that Crouch was kissed. Moony's doing okay though." Harry shrugged. "Of course he

did get fired because... umm... okay, fine, he is a bit of a mean, petty bastard.”

“Snivellus got Moony fired?” James asked appalled. “That wretched, greasy-”

Lily looked at Harry a little disappointed. “How can you keep defending him, Harry?”

Harry shrugged. “He’s one of my marked followers.”

Albus rolled his eyes suspecting Harry blurted that out on purpose.

Fawkes felt the tension in the room thickening quickly and jumped into the air trilling a peaceful song.

Lily didn’t look upset, just shocked. “You’ve... you’ve marked people?”

James narrowed his eyes and yelled, “You do hate the mudbloods!”

“For the love of Merlin, people!” Albus screamed. “Stop saying that-”

“Pussywillow! Pussywillow! Pussywillow!” Harry chanted at the top of his lungs. He ducked just in time and rolled out of the way of an emotion-driven fire hose charm Albus had just sent his way.

Sadly the powerful stream of cold water flew extremely fast across the Headmaster’s office slamming his trilling familiar into the opposite wall. Fawkes’ song stopped immediately as she was forcefully propelled into a portrait.

Albus looked on fearfully, as fire phoenixes were not known for appreciating being doused in cold water.

Fawkes righted herself, shook like a wet dog, and tried to ignore the extra volume her wet feathers currently had. She gave off one angry squawk, and Albus just paled. “Oh dear.” A quick fire flash across the room and Fawkes grabbed hold of a mouthful of Albus’ beard. The flames of her travel had started singeing his beard immediately, but

Albus had no time to think about that before the pair had fire flash traveled away.

Moments later a girlish squeal was heard just before a large splash in what was most likely the Hogwarts Lake.

Lily opened her mouth to say something but paused hearing that same girlish squeal again followed by another splash. James was snickering happily.

Harry looked at his parents. "I think that went well."

Pleasantly evil grins were all the response he got as they listened to an even longer girlish squeal followed by the painful sounding smack of a splash. There were a few more odd sounds and Harry moved over to the window. James and Lily got up to take a look and they were shocked at what they saw.

It seemed Fawkes and the Giant Squid were playing keep away with the Headmaster. That is to say, the Headmaster was being dropped and thrown back up in the air, as Fawkes and the Giant Squid kept him away from a hippogriff flying in between them.

"Should we do something?" James asked worriedly.

Harry shrugged. "Like what?"

Lily smiled and suggested, "Take pictures?"

Harry was feeling pretty good now. "We can just watch. I know how to manipulate a memory in a pensieve to make a moving picture."

They watched the Headmaster scream in fright as the hippogriff's beak was coming dangerously close to slicing open his fragile anemic body. The three Potters put their arms around each other's shoulders and smiled wistfully happily viewing the scene. Together. As a family.

CHAPTER NINE

“A muggle place?” James asked incredulously. “The goblins hold their High Council poker game in a muggle place?”

Harry rolled his eyes. “You know Prongs, you should say that a bit louder. I think there’s a nice couple a few blocks away who couldn’t hear you.”

“Sorry,” James blushed as he followed Harry and Sirius in a door and then up a staircase.

“Why is it here?” Sirius asked, observing the dirty stairwell curiously.

“The bank below is one of their muggle branches, and it has two conference rooms. One the muggles running the bank know about, and another that’s for the goblins.” Harry explained. “Besides, the good TV is here.”

“The goblins watch TV?” James questioned.

Harry just looked at his father curiously and knocked on the door four times in a short-short-long-short pattern.

A small window slid open and a gravelly voice on the other side rasped out, “Password?”

“Oh cripes, are you doing this again?” Harry whined.

“Password!” the voice insisted.

Harry nodded to his father and godfather. “You guys too, I’m sure.” He turned towards the door and intoned, “I swear on my magic I will not cheat tonight.” Harry flickered briefly in a swirl of magic and grumbled. “You can bet your arse I’m going to lie a lot though.”

James and Sirius repeated the pledge and promise to not cheat.

There was a grinding sound of a metal sliding and the door swung open. "Harry!" the goblin on the other side cheerfully smiled. "Always a pleasure."

"Evening Claptrap," Harry said with a rueful smile. Harry addressed the half dozen goblins in the room. "Gentlemen, I'm not sure if any of you remember these two jokers with me, but I would like you to meet Prongs and Padfoot."

Sirius and James waved weakly, when a particularly irate looking goblin waddled right up to Sirius and yelled, "How dare you! I am a goblin elder! I deserve the respect that I have earned. And you, you, you wizard! You come here knowingly in front of me, in front of us, and you wear purple! No! This cannot go unpunished. Guards!"

Sirius looked down at his shirt. He didn't think it was that bad but right now he was worried. "Harry?"

Harry shrugged. "I thought it was lavender but these true color halogen lights do make the tone seem richer."

"Harry!" Sirius yelled irritated at the complete lack of help that was.

"I demand reparations!" The goblin insisted. "Bring me an axe!"

Sirius began pleading for understanding and was quickly pulling the shirt over his head, when he heard an exceptional amount of snickering. It was the raspy quality to the snickering that caught Sirius' attention.

Sirius poked his head out from his shirt and saw the previously irate goblin was smiling widely at Harry. "Damn Harry. I yell just about anything loud enough and I think these two will believe it."

Harry was shaking his head. "Sorry Padfoot, but I gotta agree that's a pretty horrible color on you."

"My apologies, Mr. Padfoot," the goblin said. "I do enjoy ribbing wizards on their ignorance of goblins when I can. Don't take it

personally, but your blouse was too tempting a target for me to pass up. You may call me Logjam."

"It's not a blouse," Sirius whined. "It's a shirt, Logjam."

"Oh pardon me," Logjam grinned as his eyes seemed to twinkle. "I'm just so ignorant of your wizard couture."

Sirius had a feeling he was being mocked and given the grin on James' face, he wasn't the only one.

"Prongs, Padfoot," Harry introduced and was pointing towards specific goblins. "This is Claptrap, Hoodwink, and Brickhouse. And you have already met Griphook, Crackhead, and Logjam." Harry turned to Logjam. "I take it Ragnok is another no-show?"

Logjam nodded. "Said he needs to wash his hare."

James guffawed at the ridiculous of that excuse.

Claptrap shook his head solemnly. "He really does. His pet rabbit is quite filthy."

James and Sirius exchanged another look as though they were being mocked.

"I'm ready for a game, ladies." Harry suggested as he sat down at the poker table and began shuffling one of the decks.

"Where's the remote?" Brickhouse inquired as he began checking under seat cushions.

"You do watch TV!" James exclaimed.

"Of course," Crackhead assured. "We must constantly monitor the various worldwide markets and economies." He pointed to the TV which was on an American news channel.

"So this is the famed 'cable' I keep hearing about," Sirius said reverently looking at all the moving tickers.

“Good heavens no,” Crackhead gasped. “We’re goblins, not savages. We have a satellite.”

Harry raised an eyebrow. “Do you mean a dish?”

Crackhead smiled widely. “No. I meant satellite.”

James had no idea what they were talking about, but as a man, he decided he wanted one too.

“Ah-ha!” Brickhouse declared upon discovery of the remote.

“What’s on?” Harry asked.

Brickhouse enthusiastically responded, “The perfect poker background noise. Our baseball team is playing tonight.” He flipped through a few channels before landing on a sports one.

“You guys own the Yankees?” Harry asked noticing the game.

All the goblins proudly smiled. Hoodwink puffed up and added, “And the Red Sox too.”

“That...” Harry considered, “explains a lot.”

And that was the end of the shop talk for now. It was time to play some cards.

“Muggle cards?” Sirius asked. “And they’re not even nudies?”

“There aren’t even any pictures to move!” James exclaimed.

“Well I know one person who doesn’t have any face cards,” Harry smarmily pointed out.

“What’s with the muggle cards?” Sirius asked.

Claptrap explained, "These aren't simple muggle cards. These cards are completely resistant to magic as we find it necessary to keep Harry from cheating."

"I haven't cheated you guys even once." Harry insisted with an evil grin.

Griphook grumbled. "And you haven't lost even once yet either."

"Don't be glum Griphook," Harry cheekily grinned. "Maybe tonight's your night. Go ahead and rub Padfoot's upper thigh for luck."

Griphook's eyes widened and he scooted his chair a little further away from the wizard sitting next to him.

"I don't mind if you rub it." Sirius shrugged and sadly whispered, "Someone's got to."

The awkward silence after that comment lasted until Crackhead opened the betting.

Three hours later, several hundred thousand galleons had shifted around the room. The baseball game had ended, but no one really pays that much attention to it while they're playing anyway. It's just a comfort to have it on. Currently, there was the night's biggest pot in the middle and it was down to a familiar two people staring each other down.

Harry had a small grin while Griphook maintained as stony and expressionless a face as he could. "Griphook, my friend, I don't say this often, but I think you should fold."

The other goblins at the table all exchanged looks at this.

Griphook saw the worry on the faces of the other goblins and the restrained smile on Harry's face. "Fine. Take it." He grumbled out mucking his pocket pair. "Why? What did you have?" He inquired hopefully.

Harry snorted. "I didn't have anything. I just wanted you to fold."

“What?” Griphook sputtered. “But... you... arggggh!”

James, Sirius, and all the other goblins were laughing at Griphook purpling in anger.

Harry chuckled as he raked in the pot. “Well hell, if it’s that easy. Griphook, my friend, I think you should give me all your chips.”

Griphook snarled. “Evil untrustworthy wizards! That’s it! I’m petitioning for a rebellion!”

Logjam looked at the angry goblin. “Griphook, my friend,” he chuckled. “I think you should surrender.” It appeared as though the rebellion lost its steam as everyone had a few more good laughs at Griphook’s expense.

Griphook’s eyes lit up. “I think this evening, given the resurrection of two guests, most certainly counts as a special occasion.”

“That’s right!” Brickhouse exclaimed victoriously. “You promised Harry! Next ‘special occasion’ you said.”

Harry smiled and sighed. “Alright, but you’re all drinking with me.” He turned to his father and godfather. “You two, as well.”

Sirius lifted his glass proudly and pointed to James’ bottle. “We’ve been drinking all night.”

Harry shook his head. “No. We’re drinking Goblin Whiskey now. It’s probably a mite stronger than what you’re used to.”

Brickhouse set everyone up with a shot and a half filled glass to sip. They all prepared to take the shots and Harry advised James and Sirius, “Err... if you’ve never tried this before, you might want to lean forward.”

Brickhouse counted down from three and they all knocked back their shot of Goblin Whiskey. As expected, Sirius and James were not prepared for the strength of the alcohol, nor the speed with which it

goes through your body. And like every rookie drinker, flames shot out their arses.

“Ahhh!” Sirius yelled as he jumped up out of his chair. His throat felt like it was on fire, and without even realizing it, Sirius had fallen to the floor and was dragging his toasted rear on the carpet scuttling forward on the ground.

James’ eyes were watering heavily and he worked his hips, rubbing soothing circles onto the slightly burnt chair.

Harry and the goblins could only laugh at the two men’s predicament. Harry was having to wipe his eyes both from tears of mirth and from the extremely potent beverage. “Padfoot,” Harry whined. “Do I smell burnt hair?”

Sirius only now realized he was dragging his butt across the carpet at a poker game, as well as the fact that he was being laughed at. “Sorry bout that,” he mumbled as he stood up, clenched, and ambled his way back to his seat. “That’s one hell of a kick in that whiskey.”

Claptrap cheekily mentioned, “There’s actually more goblin in it, than whiskey.”

James could only make a pained face and unconsciously began to sip from his new glass. He coughed and choked yet again, before continuing to knock back what was affectionately christened the Goblin Sauce.

It was also at this point where the game, as well as the rest of the evening, became a bit blurry in the minds of the three wizards. Harry was in slightly better shape than James and Sirius, but even he was arguably incohesive. One thing the wizards discovered was that Goblin Whiskey does not make you tired, but actually energizes you and makes you more awake. It also slows motor functions, induces occasional hallucinations, and relaxes your inhibitions. But it doesn’t make you drowsy. Needless to say, the stakes were raised.

It was seven-thirty in the morning before they finally called it quits. Everybody seemed pretty frustrated that an inebriated Harry played

even better than a sober one, and he was the only one who came out ahead for the night.

Sirius asked Harry how much he won, and Harry complained that it was too early in the morning for math. Griphook answered him irritated, "Almost a Malfoy and a half."

James let out a low whistle. "Not a bad night's work."

Harry rolled his eyes. "Most of it, from you two though, so that's a little less impressive."

"I tried asking Griphook to fold," Sirius shrugged. "I guess he just likes you better."

"I hate you both," Griphook insisted. "Though probably Harry more."

"I'll see you ladies later," Harry said as he put a hand on each of his drunk father figures and apparated the three of them away.

The men were vainly hoping no one would be waiting up for them. They had mentioned that the game might run past midnight. Of course, they weren't sure the girls understood just how late 'past midnight' actually translates to when it comes to poker night. The three drunken men reappeared and found themselves surrounded by three angry females.

Ginny screeched. "Harry James Pot-" was as far as she got before Harry's stunner slammed into Ginny's abdomen.

"Good god, she's loud," Sirius complained rubbing his ears. "Don't you girls have any idea what time it is?"

"What?" Hermione indignantly retorted. "But... we... augh!" Perhaps lack of sleep left Hermione unprepared for her argument to be preemptively turned around on her."

"Relax Hermy," Harry slurred. "It's all good. I'm going to need to apologize to Ginny a couple times but that's cool."

Lily looked at her smiley son. "Are you drunk?"

Harry giggled. "Does a Pope shit Catholic?"

Sirius found this to be just about the funniest thing all night, followed closely by the smile on Lily's face as she tried to act angry, as her husband lovingly hugged her lower legs. All of sudden, Sirius remembered the advice Hoodwink had given him and he lunged forward and shoved Lily. James' playful hugging unfortunately now prevented her from being able to adjust her balance and she fell backwards to the floor with the grace of a stoned penguin.

"What the hell was that for?" Lily growled from the floor.

Sirius shrugged a little disappointed. "Hoodwink told me muggles love getting drunk and tipping cows. Maybe I didn't do it right."

Lily answered the only way she knew how, with her shoe. Exhaustion must have caught up with Sirius, as he was beamed in the head, fell to the floor, and immediately began snoring.

"You've been drinking and apparating?" Hermione frowned. "Harry! You know that's illegal!"

Harry nodded and smiled right back. "That reminds of something I had an idea about. I'm going to try it on you now, Herms. So do you us both a favor, and don't move."

Hermione did not like the sound of this, but feared moving would mess up whatever ridiculous idea Harry had or more likely, endanger her health.

Harry was standing approximately six feet directly in front of Hermione was concentrating heavily on her. You could feel the magic in the air swirling and tensing, building up to something big. "Ahh," Harry gulped and the tension seemed to disappear. "Okay, that wasn't right. Give me another shot here." The magic was building up again.

“Harry,” Hermione asked, feeling the massive amount of ambient magic in the air. “What are you trying to do?”

Harry was focusing his eyes on Hermione, and chewing on his bottom lip. “I’m... trying... to...” He paused and took another deep breath maintaining his concentration. “Apparate...”

Hermione looked at him oddly, as he gasped out the last word, “you.” Hermione’s eyes widened and she watched the entire world around her shift and then snap back into place, with her five feet to her left.

“What the hell was that?” Hermione explained confused by the sensations.

“Oh my god, it worked!” An elated and still drunk Harry cheered. “I can’t believe it worked and I haven’t passed-”

Nicholas appeared with a pop and caught the fainting Harry Potter. “I got him.” Nicholas smiled and shook his head. “I’m not sure Harry and Goblin Sauce make a very good team.”

Lily was clutching her heart at the sudden appearance of Nicholas Flamel. “Goblin Sauce?”

Nicholas shrugged. “Goblin Whiskey if you prefer. And trust me, Harry’s an idiot, and will be magically exhausted for a little while. Though I must admit to being impressed he managed to pull that off.”

Hermione was looking at what she knew had to be a from-the-future Harry, and asked, “What the hell did he do? I find it hard to believe that he actually apparated me, because the idea is ridiculous and it felt different from normal apparition.”

Lily nodded at the old man. “Yeah, I could have sworn I felt it too but I wasn’t pulled into Hermione’s field I know.”

Nicholas was blushing, having to explain this one to Hermione. “He’s not usually this dense, and he would have known better than to try this if he were sober. But he...”

Hermione was smirking happily. "What?"

Nicholas sighed. "He thought he could give off the appearance of apparating you, my snuggums, if he only concentrated on apparating himself, and everything else on the planet, except you, and shifting us all five feet to your right."

"He apparated us? The whole planet?" Lily asked, ignoring the snores from her husband at her feet.

Nicholas shrugged. "I somewhat doubt he did the whole planet, but he certainly got this room. Probably the building. Maybe the Alley, Maybe the town, the island, I don't know. But hopefully enough to call the experiment a success and know better than to ever try it again."

Lily looked at her unconscious son. "He is brilliantly stupid, isn't he?"

Hermione flashed Nicholas a victorious smile and agreed that Lily was at least half-right.

"Bessie, if you wouldn't mind taking your unconscious husband to bed, I'll tuck in Padfoot, and then help my little lady tucking in your brilliantly stupid offspring."

Hermione raised an eyebrow. "I think I can take care of him."

"I agree," Nicholas said as he levitated Sirius snoring body. "But I don't trust you."

Hermione huffed and dragged Harry towards his room the muggle way.

"I'm going to head to bed as well," Lily said as she levitated her husband. "Should we do something for Ginny?"

Hermione waved Lily off. "I'll take her home when I leave, Bessie. Don't worry about it."

“Thanks Hermione,” Lily replied. “And thank you and Ginny both for staying up with me. We should strip down to our skivvies and have pillow fights more often.”

Nicholas pretended not to hear that, but he did bang Sirius’s floating body into the doorframe.

Harry was dreaming. He could tell. He was also conscious of the fact he only ever dreamed like this when he was seriously magically exhausted. He must have done something pretty stupid.

The biggest clue informing him that he was dreaming was the fact that he was the only wizard around in sight. And he was completely surrounded by a large crowd of angry, yelling house-elves.

A high-pitched voice drew Harry’s attention towards a fenced in area. It was an area Harry recognized immediately. And only now did Harry realize he had stumbled into the house-elf underground fighting circuit. Actually the idea that there was an underground house-elf fighting circuit didn’t really surprise Harry that much. But what the announcer called out did.

“And in this corner, weighing in at thirty-two and a half pounds...Dobbbbbby!”

Harry’s ears immediately perked up and he noticed a much younger version of his apprentice and friend.

“And in this corner, weighing in at thirty-seven pounds...Dubbbbyaaaa!”

Harry looked at the most odd looking house-elf he’d ever seen. He was almost human-looking despite his massive ears. “Dubya?” Harry repeated trying the name out.

Dobby looked nervous, while Dubya was eating up the attention.

“Fight!” A loud voice echoed as a bell rang, and the two elves sprinted straight at each other and began grappling in some sort of wrestling battle of strength. A quick pop and Dobby grabbed Dubya

from behind. Dobby squeezed Dubya in a bear hug and slammed him backwards onto his own head.

The angry crowd cheered the violent house-elf battle, Harry cheering on Dobby the loudest.

Dubya got up off the ground and sprinted straight at Dobby. Dobby spun away from Dubya's bull charge, and grabbed one of Dubya's ears as he went past. A twist and whip of his arm and Dubya was flung viciously onto the ground.

Dobby smiled at the crowds and was flexing both his arms showing off his rippling muscles. Harry wasn't exactly impressed, but Dobby seemed proud. Dobby wasn't paying attention to his opponent who had made his way to his feet.

Dubya snarled angrily. A quick pop and he was right behind Dobby. He drew his little foot back and booted Dobby right in the arse knocking Dobby headfirst into the ground.

"Heh-heh-heh." Dubya snickered. "Dubya is a Dobby ass-kicker. Dubya ass-kicks Dobby. Heh-heh-heh."

Dobby got back up and snapped back, "Yous better kick your ass goodbye, because Dobby going to kiss it from here to the holy land."

"Heh-heh-heh," Dubya cackled. "Yous going to kiss my what, where?"

"Ass," Dobby retorted. "Holy land."

"Heh-heh-heh." Dubya evilly giggled knowing Dobby was making a fool of himself.

An ear-piercing shriek of a woman attracted Harry's attention. A few looks around and Harry realized no other house-elves heard that. With a shake of his head, Harry woke up in his bed, strangely alert. Another squeal and scream and Harry ran into his living room. He immediately saw the problem and tried to calm his frantic mother. "Bessie!" He yelled. "Lily! Mum!"

Lily looked terrified and tore her gaze away to make eye contact with her son.

“Mum, relax.” Harry looked over at his friend. “Trust me... he’s more scared of you right now, than you are of him.”

Lily thought her son might be crazy, but was accepting that reality concerning him was more than a tad bit skewed. “Really?” She asked weakly looking over at the massive creature.

“No, not really,” Bob calmly replied. “But if it will calm you down, you go right on ahead and believe that.”

“Aieieeee!” Lily squealed again, completely unprepared for a dementor to speak normal English.

“Stop it, Bob,” Harry frowned. “You’re not helping.”

Bob shrugged and settled himself down on the couch. “And you’ve got a hole in the seat of your pajamas. Goblins get you drinking again?”

Harry groaned and clutched his head at the reminder, ignoring his exposed bottom. “Bessie, meet Bob. He’s not exactly the sort of dementor you’re probably used to. Bob, this lovely lady is my mother, Bessie.”

Bob waved from where he was seated. “I’d get up and shake your hand, but you still look like you’re tempted to run screaming away, so I’m just going to wave from here.”

Lily looked between her son and this gentlemanly dementor named Bob. “Err... thanks.”

Bob nodded. “Sorry I startled you. Nicholas told me I should just drop on by, and that you would be expecting me.”

Harry smiled ruefully. “Nicholas would say something like that.”

Lily just laughed weakly, still uncomfortable with the idea of a friendly dementor.

Bob saw Lily's apprehension. "Don't worry, Bessie. I'd never hurt any of you, but I can see I'm making you nervous. So I'm just going to go watch Sirius sleep." Bob got up and glided into Sirius' bedroom.

Lily paled remembering Sirius' horror stories from Azkaban.

Bob's amused voice called out from the Sirius' bedroom. "Hey! You hit him with a Venerio!"

"Erm, Bob," Harry asked nervously. "Why are you looking?"

"Oh shush, The-Boy-Who-Loved-Boys," Bob called back. The complete lack of screams of terror indicated Sirius was an extremely sound sleeper.

"You okay, Mum?" Harry asked his mother cautiously.

Lily nodded and looked a little ashamed. "I'm sorry Harry. It's just that... Bob looks so scary."

"Yeah, and don't mention anything about him to anyone, if you don't mind." Harry explained. "The wizarding world isn't ready for the idea of a normal, courteous dementor."

Lily nodded agreeing heartily. "I was going to make myself a late lunch. Would you like something?"

Harry nodded. "Sure. Just make two of whatever you're having. You don't have to grill up any of your sisters for me. But if you don't mind, I would like to talk with my apprentice about an underground cage match he fought in, back in his youth."

Lily just nodded, still acclimating to life around her son, and walked to the kitchen.

With a pop and a fearful look Dobby immediately appeared. "You... you know about those, Master?"

Harry looked at his apprentice and raised an eyebrow. "Those? You were in several?"

Dobby gulped and bowed his head.

Harry smiled at his little friend. "Relax Dobby. I've fought in a few illegal full contact cage matches myself. I'm just curious about this part of your life I've never heard of."

"You found about one? How did you find out? House-elves are supposed to keep them secret!"

Harry shrugged. "I probably got it from you actually. I don't think there's been a whole lot of Master-Apprentice bonds between wizards and house-elves. It was just this past night or morning I guess, I dreamt about you in a cage match with a really weird looking elf called-"

"Dubya!" Dobby interrupted and his eyes flared. "Dobby hate Dubya! Dobby really hate Dubya!"

"Dobby so angry Dobby talking house-elfish," Harry interrupted.

Dobby paused and composed himself. "Sorry Master, it's just a part of my life I try not to think about."

Harry smiled. "You know I don't care if you talk house-elfish or not. And I didn't mean to bring back bad memories. You don't have to explain it to me, if it bothers you at all. But as your friend, I am curious."

Dobby popped away for a second and reappeared with two butterbeers. He handed one to Harry and chugged a few mouthfuls from his own bottle.

"It was back with the bad Masters," Dobby began, regaling an old war story.

“No punishing yourself,” Harry reminded. “You know that one’s permanent.”

Dobby nodded and sipped his bottle. “Yes. I know.” He took a deep breath and continued in a squeaky voice, “Old Master used to just tell Dobby to punish himself for no discernible reason. Dobby was not only elf who got told this. This been a practice for a long time. So house-elves sometimes get together and help each other punish ourselves, as well as work off our extra energy. It’s also sort of fun, but it only works if Masters don’t know how much fun punishing ourselves is. They just see us with bruises and cuts and are satisfied.”

Harry shook his head with a grin. “You house-elves are so much more devious than people realize. And I won’t pretend to know how bad it was for you with those people, but I’m glad to hear you had some fun.”

Dobby nodded and was enjoying his butterbeer.

“So why do you hate Dubya? And is he a normal house-elf?”

Dobby snarled, and briefly Harry imagined Dobby as an angry drunk. “Dubya,” Dobby spit out the name, “was always mean to Dobby. He made fun of me and mocked me any time he could. Made me look stupid.”

“Yeah,” Harry smiled. “I think I heard you talking about kissing his ass holy land.”

Dobby blushed and dropped his head. “Yes Master. That’s why I was so happy you took me on as an apprentice. So I no longer will be caught without a snappy comeback again.”

Harry smiled, realizing his student of the craft was exorcising some old demons. Metaphorically, this time, thankfully. “So is Dubya a normal full blooded house-elf? Because he looked... off.”

Dobby smiled. "No he is not all house-elf. It was a topic of discussion for some time, but according to Dubya, he is half house-elf, half goblin, and half tree."

Harry's eyebrows rose. "Isn't that three halves?"

Dobby nodded. "Yes. We think it's the tree."

Harry could only agree as he enjoyed his butterbeer. "So did you win that match? I woke up shortly after he booted you in the buttocks."

"Oh that match!" Dobby nodded. "Yes, luckily, I won that one. Thanks be to Potty."

Harry grumbled knowing Dobby would claim to be praising toilets, throwing the cheek back in Harry's face. "Why was that lucky?"

Dobby was briefly lost in thought. "Oh, sorry, Master. It was lucky because Dobby and Dubya had a wager on that match. Loser had to become president of the uni-"

"Aaaaahhhhhh!" A shrill scream cut into their conversation.

Harry smiled. "I think Padfoot woke up."

"Aaaaahhhhhh!" the scream continued trailing off into whimpers and gasps for breath. "Oh God, no! James! Lily! Nooooo!"

Harry was snickering when Lily came rushing out of the kitchen. "Is he going to be... alright?"

"Harry!" the voice cried, in obvious anguish. "Oh Harry. I failed you. It's all my fault. Oh Harry." He sniffled.

Harry smiled and shrugged. "I hope so."

"Oh God!" the voice continued wailing wildly. "What have I done? It was just a baby. She never hurt anyone! Oh God, I'm a monster!"

Lily was wavering between staying out here and learning more about whatever Sirius was screaming now, or running in there to help the man who sounded like he was in severe emotional turmoil. She ignored her better judgment and decided to help her son's godfather. She hurriedly ran to his bedroom. "Sirius! Padfoot! It's okay! You're safe!"

She burst into the room and saw a widely grinning Sirius sitting fully clothed and calmly on his bed. "Oh Lils," he shook his head ruefully. "There's a fucker born every minute."

Lily huffed angrily, once again promising to never care about Sirius ever again. She was secretly punishing him slightly by not correcting his verbal mistake.

"Honestly," Sirius grinned. "A fake dementor in my room when I wake up? Was that the best you guys could come up with?"

Lily looked over at Bob, who wasn't moving, but merely sitting down looking amused. Lily explained, "Err... Sirius? That's not a fake dementor."

"I think I've spent enough time around them, little Bessie," Sirius chided. "We'd both be feeling a bit cold this close to a dementor."

"Not with Bob," Lily said with a nod to the dementor. "He's not what you expect from a dementor."

Sirius looked over towards Bob and saw the unmoving dementor.

Bob waited about five seconds, lulling Sirius into thinking Lily crazy. Then he jumped out of his seat and extended a bony decaying hand. "How you doin', Padfoot?"

"Aaaaahhhhhh!" Sirius yelped falling to the floor and scrambling backwards away from the creature. "Oh my God! Aaaaahhhhhh!"

Lily looked over at the imposing and massive creature. "I'm starting to like you, Bob."

“Sorry, Bessie,” Bob joked. “But my heart belongs to another.”

“Oh... err, I didn’t...” Lily stammered. “I mean...”

“Although if you ever find my heart,” Bob asked scratching where his chin should be. “Do let me know. I would like it back at some point.”

Lily just sat there dumbfounded. “Alright.” She agreed.

Sirius had stopped scrambling away once he’d backed into a wall and hadn’t remembered about lateral movement. He seemed a lot less freaked out and was trying to remember something. “I swear I know that voice,” Sirius was saying to himself.

“Yes you do,” Bob agreed. “Though I’m not too sure how well your memory held up.”

“Wait a minute,” Sirius realized. “You’re real!”

Bob nodded. “So I’m told.”

“I always thought I was hallucinating playing gobstones with a dementor!” Sirius exclaimed.

Bob shook his head. “Nope. You were always my most aware opponent.”

“If I recall correctly, I think I won a whole lot more than you did,” Sirius added with a smirk.

Bob shook his head. “There’s that memory loss I was talking about, Padfoot.”

“Hey now!” Sirius complained. “I’ll beat your decayed rotten arse again, if you got the stones for it.”

Lily smiled remembering a curse. “Because we know you don’t have them right now.”

A sleepy voice from another bedroom yelled out, "Dammit Padfoot! First with the screaming, now with yelling! Some of us need our beauty sleep here!"

"Hey Prongs!" Sirius yelled back. "I've got an old prison buddy out here!"

"Really?" a slightly worried voice yelled back.

"Hello Prongs," Bob yelled. "I'm Bob."

James hastily put on some clothes and came out of his room calling back, "Hi Bob. So what were you in for?" James walked into Sirius' bedroom and saw his wife, his best friend, and then noticed the fake dementor thing standing right next to him. He ignored whatever odd fetishes Sirius had now due to that wretched prison. Thinking the coast was clear he whispered towards Sirius. "What was Bob in for?"

Sirius' wicked grin in response worried James, so he was able to keep his composure when he felt a hand on his shoulder. A large hood leaned over James shoulder, turned his head so he could see his face, and rasped out, "Identity theft."

"Oh Bob," James groaned. "Identity theft? From a soul sucker? That's a horrible pun." James shook his head in disappointment. "Maybe you do deserve Azkaban."

Bob was thoroughly flabbergasted at the lack of fear from James. He took his hand off James shoulder and walked back to the kitchen, wondering at what point he had lost it. Back when he had it, that would've had three out of four people wetting themselves, but today, nothing. He didn't even get a flinch. Bob didn't know it, but he was having a bit of an identity crisis. And right now he could use a hug, so he went looking for Harry.

Sirius and Lily were shocked at the complete nonchalance James responded with. They felt cheated out of him squealing in fear, but they were also completely impressed.

“Bob seemed nice,” James stated happily. “Was he... err... human? Because that tongue thing and lack of skin on his face was a bit intimidating.”

Sirius goggled at him. “Bob’s a dementor.”

James looked back down the hall the direction Bob went. “That? No, that wasn’t a dementor.”

Lily shook her head at her husband. “Whatever you say, honey. Though, I should point out you have a piece of diseased dementor flesh that seems to have rotted off and landed on your shoulder there.”

James look over and saw a grayish-orange lumpy hunk of something on his shirt. He picked it off and looked at it curiously. He raised an eyebrow at his best friend and wife. “This? Is a piece of dementor?”

Sirius reluctantly nodded, a bit disgusted by the way James was squeezing it between his fingers.

“Right,” James said with a roll of his eyes. He quickly tossed the chunk of Bob into his mouth and made a show of chewing it up.

Lily and Sirius just stared at James in abject horror. Lily shook her head. “Oh you stupid man. You take after your son.”

“He’s your son too,” Sirius pointed out.

Lily disagreed. “When he’s stupid he’s all James’ boy.”

James’ gag reflex finally kicked in as the taste buds in his mouth reacted violently to something he was chewing through. He began spitting out all over the ground and was scraping his own tongue with his fingernails in an effort to clean it. “Oh god. It tasted like boiled feet.”

CHAPTER TEN

“Miss Bessie, please forgive my intrusion. But pardon me. Mr. Prongs?” Nicholas inquired poking his head in on the two zombie Potters.

“Yes sir?” James asked sitting up straighter, and making his wife chuckle.

Nicholas was also terribly amused that his father used an honorific with him. “No need to be so formal, please call me Nicholas. That goes for both of you. I’ve no doubt your son has used and will continue to use any number of nick-names for me as well.”

James relaxed a bit and smiled. “Aren’t you a punny old man.”

Nicholas arched an eyebrow at him. “On second thought, do call me sir.”

James feared he’d gone too far. “Yes sir.” He meekly acquiesced ignoring his wife’s now annoying chuckle.

Nicholas grinned and began, “I understand you chewed and potentially digested some dementor flesh. Our research would be greatly aided if we could ask you a few questions?”

“That really was a piece of dementor, wasn’t it?” James reticently admitted.

Nicholas nodded with certainty. “Yup. Sometimes they shed, though Bob’s usually better than most about cleaning up after himself.”

James sat back worriedly. “Am I going to die?”

Nicholas snorted. “It happened once. Odds are it will happen again.”

“Oh,” James remembered and feebly added, “Right.”

"I sincerely doubt your life is in peril from the small amount you may have ingested. Any effects or responses will most likely be temporary, though I suspect you will have some irregular bowel movements. I am curious if you've noticed any particular changes or symptoms?"

James pursed his lips in thought. "Hmm... like what?"

"Well," Nicholas suggested with a bright twinkle in his eye. "Have you experienced any erectile dysfunction?"

James paled rapidly and gulped comically. With a loud yelp he ran as fast as he could from the room.

Nicholas looked over at Lily. "Any guesses until how long?"

"Nope! Still works!" An ecstatic voiced cheered from the next room and hastily added, "Sir!"

Nicholas had reached the point where he just smiled uncomfortably at his mum and was hoping 'Harry' would get here soon. Albus Dumbledore and three of his most senior professors were all sitting around waiting for the fourth Head of House to arrive.

"Sorry, I'm late Albus," Harry started before noticing the company for this requested meeting. "Oh what is this? Time to guilt me back into taking the job again?"

"We're not here to add to your already massive amounts of well-deserved guilt, Harry," Albus explained. "And you haven't quit either. We're here to blackmail you into keeping your job."

Harry stifled his giggle at Minerva's look of surprise and Severus impressed grin. Apparently, Albus hadn't told anyone else the purpose of this meeting. "Albus, you know my current predicament. There's no way I can be fixing that problem and teaching here. I can't be in two places at once."

Severus and Albus both coughed painfully at the same time.

Harry's eyes twinkled and with a flick of his wrist conjured two clear glasses in front of Albus and Severus. "Need some water?"

Severus took his glass gratefully and was soothing his throat, while Albus dug out a flask and raised an eyebrow towards Severus. "No thank you, Harry. I've got my own."

Severus stopped drinking immediately. He began inspecting and sniffing his glass of water.

Minerva and Filius were laughing at the uncomfortable looks their Slytherin colleague had.

Albus was composed after a few swigs from his mystery flask. "I do understand your circumstances and have a mutually beneficial compromise to suggest."

Harry raised an eyebrow. "I certainly don't like the sound of that."

Albus ignored him. "Severus here has been quite pleased having taken on an apprentice who he can split his Head of House and classroom responsibilities with. Not to mention he now has far more free time to explore his own field with another skilled individual. I thought it might be a good idea to encourage more of the faculty to do the same. I think the Heads of House and their core subjects would be a good place to start."

Harry frowned. "I already have an apprentice, thank you very much. I'm not sure I'm open to taking on another."

Albus rolled his eyes. "I was thinking more along the lines of apprenticing in the field you actually get paid to teach here at Hogwarts. We don't need your cheek disease spreading more than it already has."

"But I'm not even a Defense Master," Harry whined doing his best to counter any argument.

Albus grinned happily. "Do you really wish it to be made official, so you can add another title to your already impressively long list?"

Severus sighed lightly in relief. He mumbled quietly, "I'm so glad you said list."

Harry grumbled. "No thank you, I'd rather there not be any more titles."

Minerva wasn't sold on this idea. "But Albus, where would we even find suitable apprentices? There have not been any particularly remarkable transfiguration students, other than perhaps the two already on staff here."

Albus' eyes twinkled victoriously. "It just so happens there are two very promising young adults, one particularly adept at Charms, and another at Transfiguration. Now Harry here needs to keep a relatively close eye on them, and what better way than if they are making themselves useful as members of Hogwarts' faculty?"

Filius had years of experience reading between the lines with the Headmaster. "You want us to babysit?"

Harry just stared silently at the Headmaster, giving the impression he was deep in thought.

Albus turned to his Charms Professor. "I assure you Filius, you will be quite pleased to be working once again with this young witch."

"I've worked with her before?" Filius squeaked, trying to think of who it could be.

Albus nodded. "And you, Minerva, will be working with a natural."

"A natural," Minerva's eyes lit up and she got excited. "The last natural that I know of was James Potter."

The grin on Albus' face was terribly unsettling to Severus. Albus smiled at Harry. "I was hoping you might take on the third special case yourself. What you train your apprentice is your business, no one else's. And I also think he might be a positive influence on your little puffers."

“You realize this means I won’t have as much time to fix my problem as I would if I just took the year off?” Harry inquired.

Albus nodded. “I do. But I also think it isn’t fair to consider it solely your problem. I believe they deserve a say as well.”

Harry didn’t want to consider a conversation of that magnitude. “And if I refuse?”

Albus shrugged. “That’s when we blackmail you.”

Everyone was looking to Albus for a little elaboration.

“An anonymous letter to the mothers of members of the Hufflepuff house would break a great many hearts, to which there would be a massive public outcry, and I just don’t want to see you have to deal with all of that guilt.”

Harry shook his head at Albus.

“And besides,” Albus added. “There’s always one other opinion, you must consider as well.”

Harry saw the other Heads of House were all as clueless as he was. “Who’s that?”

Albus smiled widely and before Harry realized what was happening the castle had swallowed him whole and dropped him from the ceiling, right on his head.

“Damn bitch,” Harry moaned, rubbing his head in pain. “That hurts!”

Apparently, besides being painful, it was also quite funny. At least to Filius, Albus, Severus, and Minerva.

“Alright, fine,” Harry spat out. “In fact, I think I’m going to go get our new apprentices now. I know they be thrilled to see you all.” And without even standing up, Harry disappeared from the Headmaster’s office.

"I already have an apprentice, Albus," Severus began once Harry had left. "So why am I here?"

Albus smiled and was twittering in anticipation. "I wanted you on hand to give your opinion on the benefits of an apprenticeship, as well as prepare all the Heads of Houses for some of the new faculty."

Minerva looked at Albus oddly. "Did Potter jinx your knickers, Albus? Because you seem to be twittering."

Albus blushed and did his best to calm down. "Oh please excuse me. I had my ear chewed off earlier by a couple of Harry's latest problems, and I was looking forward to seeing them again."

And with a sudden pop, Harry reappeared with his three guests.

Filius saw the familiar redhead next to Harry. He summed up the situation nice and cleanly. "Holy fuck."

"The mudblood whore!" Severus gasped, seeing a face he thought he would never have to again.

Lily turned to her son. "This? This is the Snivellus you keep defending?" Any further berating was cut off as Severus screamed loudly and fell to the floor. He was punching his arm viciously and arching his back as though he was under the Cruciatus.

Minerva, seeing her colleague in distress, quickly asked, "Is the Dark Lord punishing him?"

"Something like that," Harry admitted, ignoring the Slytherin Head of House's wails.

Minerva turned to look at Harry and only now spotted the near twin standing behind him. Her eyes went between the two back and forth as though her pupils were playing ping-pong. "It's a demon! The fool has summoned demons!"

"Minnie!" James cheered with a pleased smile.

“Back! Back!” She ordered lifting up the cross on her necklace. “Be gone, filth!”

“I told you she liked me better,” Sirius spoke up from his hidden position behind James.

Severus’ screams had stopped, though his body was still convulsing and spasming on occasion. He could be heard quietly praying. “Dear God, make me a bird. So I could fly far. Far far away from here. Dear God, make me a bird...”

Albus felt a modicum of pity for his Potions Professor, but that was quickly overwhelmed by his amusement. He nearly wanted to cheer that the parents Potter had a more worthy target for their ire now.

Filius had walked right up to Lily and began poking and pinching her. “It feels so real.”

Lily frowned and swatted his hand off her arse. “I am real, Professor Flitwick.”

Filius frowned harshly at her. “No you’re not! You died almost twenty years ago!”

Sirius raised his hand to draw attention his way. “But I only died five years ago, right Warden?”

Albus frowned. “More like six, and I was hoping you’d stopped calling me that.”

Sirius sent Albus a cold stare, still a bit bitter about having been confined to Grimmauld Place. And thoroughly blaming Albus for making Sirius see the reason in staying there.

“Sorry?” Albus said weakly with a shrug.

Sirius smiled brightly. “That’s alright, Albus. I know you couldn’t have kept me there if I hadn’t agreed to stay. But I figure everyone in the world is pretty soon going to be blaming my godson for their problems

and looking to him for their solutions, so at least a few of us must still blame you for everything instead.”

Albus nodded understanding, and naturally blaming Harry for this problem.

“Dammit Albus!” Minerva insisted. “I will not expose my students to this... this... Potter!”

James frowned. “Why’s she saying that like it’s a bad thing?”

Lily was looking to her former Charms Professor. “Professor Flitwick, it really is me. But you can call me Bessie, since we can’t exactly be called by our proper names. I mean, hell, we’re dead.”

“You haven’t even aged a day!” Filius asked curiously.

“Oh well in that case,” James tried to explain. “The old Vold never killed us, just sent us,” he wagged his fingers and acted spooky, “twenty years into the future. Wooooooo.”

“Hey!” Sirius complained. “What about me?”

“Oh you’re a demon. No way around that one. Those two,” James said pointing to Harry and Albus, “among others, saw you try a triple lutz through the veil. Our only witnesses were, at best, a baby and a toasty Dork Lord.”

Minerva frowned at her potential future apprentice and his young wife. “Your funerals were open casket.”

“Oh,” James sagged. “Well never mind then.”

“I sincerely hope there weren’t all lilies in the arrangements,” Lily replied and grumbled. “Bloody annoying, bloody flower.”

Filius shook his head. “No, Remus made sure you had plenty of sunflowers at the front.”

Lily smiled. "I should thank Moony for that." Her eyes brightened considerably. "Maybe he took pictures."

Severus seemed to snap out of his stupor and was terribly disappointed to see reality had not altered since his last perception. "You all should be dead! I outlived you all! Hah!"

Lily snapped back, "And just where do you think you're going to spend eternity, Snivellus?"

"God said we were perfect," James shrugged. "Gave us a mulligan." The response James got was a whole roomful of snorts of disbelief, as well as some frightened mumbling from Severus.

Harry explained. "My err... accidental magic is a bit more powerful than most. I'm working on fixing these three."

"Accidental necromancy?" Filius asked curiously.

"Sort of," Harry shrugged. "But not exactly."

"What is there to fix?" Severus yelled. "Give me a hammer, I'll fix them myself." And for the second time, the Potions Professor collapsed to the ground flailing about.

"I haven't exactly raised the dead. And the bodies that Moe, Larry, and Bessie here inhabit are kind of important to the people who should be in them."

Minerva finally put all the pieces together with the explosion several days ago. She half-heartedly shrugged. "The Dursleys probably deserved it. I say leave them alone."

"Awww," James smiled cheekily. "Don't worry Minnie. We'll have plenty of time together." He walked up to her and slung his arm over her shoulder. "Just think you, me, and a class full of Slytherins."

"No!" Severus yelled from the floor. "You can't do that! Albus, tell him no! He'll ruin the points system!"

Albus said nothing and just looked straight at Severus.

“Oh come on!” Severus pleaded. “He’s going to completely favor…” He trailed off seeing Albus’ stern glare. “Oh fine.”

Lily shrugged at Albus. “I’ll teach Potions, if you’re ready to fire this git, Headmaster.”

James tried to sweeten the offer. “I’ll promise not to take a single point from Slytherin if you do.”

Albus frowned. “No one’s getting fired, no one’s getting fixed.” He ignored Sirius pitiful whimper. “I want all members of staff to get along and co-exist, do you understand me?”

Filius helpfully pointed out, “I want world peace, Albus. It doesn’t mean it’s going to happen.”

With a pop, Dobby appeared and handed a magically spinning bowl of green to the little Charms Professor. “Your whirled peas, sir.” He disappeared with a cheeky pop.

“Cool,” Filius exclaimed looking down at the small tornado of vegetables.

Sirius looked upward and began loudly. “I want Celestina Warbeck to boil up some hot strong love-”

“Padfoot!” Harry interrupted. “Not now, please.”

“Later?” He genuinely asked.

“Yes, later.” Harry rolled his eyes. “When you’re alone preferably.”

Sirius frowned with a look of childlike innocence and fear. He whispered to nobody, “that’s when the voices come back.”

Severus from his prone and awkward position on the floor muttered angrily. “If they’re telling you to kill yourself, perhaps you should avoid inciting their wrath.”

“Severus,” Harry scolded, getting a little irritated. “You are going to have to behave yourself this year.”

Lily snorted. “Like that’ll happen.”

“And you!” Harry spun around and addressed his parents and godfather. “You are going to have to as well!”

Severus looked up and smirked at them. When Harry wasn’t looking he stuck his tongue out at them.

“Severus,” Albus scolded seeing his Potions Professor act even more childish than usual.

“Crap,” Severus complained. “I forgot you were here.”

“But Harry...” Sirius whined.

“No Padfoot,” Harry insisted. “If you’re here, you’re being nice to Snivel- err... I mean Severus. And if you’re not here, then you’re spending most of your time in the apartment, while I’m working on figuring out how to fix you guys.”

“You’re threatening to kill us quicker?” James asked before thinking about some of his son’s issues and adding, “Again?”

Harry narrowed his eyes at his father. “You’re not even really alive, and I’m not threatening to kill you. This is the situation, and it’s your choice whether I’m staying at Hogwarts.”

“Getting along with...” Lily just pointed and wasn’t sure what to call it. “That’s not exactly the easiest thing in the world. Just ask his friends.”

Sirius snickered. “Nice one, Bessie.”

“I have friends, you mud-eragggackkkk-born witch.” Severus insisted.

Albus smiled brightly. “Oh Severus, it warms my heart to hear you admit it out loud.” Albus opened his arms. “Would you like a hug?”

Severus hissed in pain, when his expected snarl and haughty lip curl snapped into place and his dry chapped lip split open. He began wondering if life under Voldemort might have been better.

“And besides, Padfoot.” Harry supplanted. “If you can’t get along, I’m not buying you a motorcycle.”

“No!” Sirius gulped. “You wouldn’t!”

“If I tolerate the greasy git, do I get one too?” James asked.

“Oh, sweetie,” Lily dangerously input. “Do you remember getting permission for a motorcycle?”

James gulped and looked at his wife. “But, honey, all those concerns about danger become silly when we’ve already died.”

Lily kept forgetting that and unfortunately saw the logic in it. “Alright... but you know what this means then, right?”

“Yes, honey,” James sadly said with a bowed head. “I’ll get a few pairs of leather pants.”

“Can we go now?” Sirius pleaded. “Can we? Can we? Can we?”

Harry looked at his eager godfather, and looked over at Albus. “So we’re doing this apprentice-assistant teaching thing?”

Albus looked at Minerva and Filius who were both nodding and shrugging. Severus was shaking his head vigorously. Albus smiled. “I think we are. And I can see Padfoot is getting over-excited, so please take him outside before he and Fawkes start warring over territory they’ve marked.”

Sirius had the painful mock hurt look on his face, but no one missed the way he forcefully crossed his legs.

Lily smiled. “I even know where there’s a dealership! We can get my old woody out of the garage!”

Harry couldn't stop the smile from his face. "Your woody?"

Lily nodded. "I'm guessing that my old station wagon with the fake wood painted side paneling wasn't used to seal any fiery portals to hell?"

Harry shook his head. "Never even took it out of storage."

"Yes!" Lily cheered. "The Short Bus lives on!"

James and Sirius exchanged an excited look. "Road trip!"
"What the hell are you guys wearing?" A perplexed Harry Potter asked.

Sirius, James, and Remus were all smiling brightly. Sirius grinned. "I'm wearing Sex Mongoose. It smells just as good as Sex Panther, but at half the cost."

"Not that, you nitwit," Harry grumbled. He pointed feverishly towards the ridiculous looking things on their heads. "That!"

"It's a Lily rule," Remus said looking upwards at his headgear. "When she's driving, we all have to wear our helmets."

"Are those bicycle helmets?" Harry inquired.

"No," James frowned. "They're our helmets for when Lily's driving. Weren't you listening?"

Harry looked at his father curiously. "Right. Sorry."

"Hey mum?" Harry asked. "Can I ride up front with you? I seem to have... forgotten my helmet."

Lily smiled at him. "Of course sweetie. If you don't have a helmet, you have to ride up front." She whispered conspiratorially, "Makes more sense on the Short Bus." Remus, Sirius, and James piled into the back seat with their matching helmets while Lily and Harry sat in the

front. She settled her hands at ten and two o'clock on the steering wheel and the group headed on out.

Harry chuckled. "Do they even realize what that name means? Or what it looks like with them in the car with helmets on?"

Lily seriously doubted they did back in school, but now wasn't so sure. "I don't know. Hey miscreants! Do you even realize what you look like with your helmets on?"

Remus had a goofy grin. "I think two-thirds of us do now, though back then we didn't."

Sirius smiled cheekily and winked. "Make that three-thirds, my fuzzy friend. I get it now too."

Remus sighed. "I was already counting you, Padfoot."

"Oh," Sirius apologized. "My bad. One-third then."

Remus rolled his eyes. "I think you might want to tighten your chinstrap, Padfoot."

Sirius shook his massive helmeted head. "Nope. This was as tight as I could possibly make it. And it still tingles when I shake my head like that." He shook again and you could see the blood rushing and draining from him.

James frowned looking at his friends' chuckles and his wife's proud smile. "I don't get it. What's so funny about the Short Bus? Or the helmets?"

"Never you mind, sweetie," Lily deflected.

"I'm not stupid, you know," James pouted and was practically daring them to make a snarky response.

"Of course you aren't," Lily agreed. "But you are easily distracted. Would you like me to turn on the radio?"

“The Muggling Wireless! Yeah!” James cheered.

Harry was repeating to himself ‘Muggling Wireless?’ while Lily turned on the radio and tuned it until she hit something other than static.

“Yay!” James cheered exuberantly. He was clapping in joy, and made for quite a sight to anyone passing the aptly named Short Bus. James excitement seemed to freeze in time as he paused and asked, “Err... is this a song? Because it sort of sounds like one, but I thought songs had music.”

Sirius shook his head happily. “Naw. I think it’s a com-facial.”

“Commercial, Padfoot!” Lily insisted. “Commercial. Oh good lord.”

Sirius’ eyes twinkled merrily. “Enh, I was close.”

Harry was listening to the radio and added, “You know, I think this might actually be a song.”

Remus shook his head. “It sounds like someone caught Goyle’s Dink Lord in a vice. And they keep tightening it until he finally spells ‘bandanas’ correctly.”

“That’s not a human singing,” Sirius argued. “You can tell by the voice.”

“What?” James asked, completely baffled by that last statement.

“It’s a gorilla,” Sirius stated plainly. He saw he didn’t have much support here as they all were giving him that special look that’s usually reserved for Albus. The alleged song continued and Sirius yelled triumphantly. “There! You see! It’s probably a silverback. It keeps insisting it’s not a hollowback gorilla.” Sirius paused only a beat before asking, “Actually, what is a hollowback gorilla?”

Harry considered it and said, “I retract what I said earlier. This is, in fact, a com-facial.”

Lily growled and twisted the knob viciously. "Alright. That's enough radio for now. How about another story? I think it's our turn too, Harry. So what would you like to know?"

A couple sad boys in the back were pouting that the Muggling Wireless was off.

Harry thought about it, and remembered a conversation he'd had with Luna. He turned to his father and asked, "When did you fall in love with Mum?"

James looked over at Sirius and seemed to be pondering the question. "What was it? About summer after fifth and then start of sixth year?"

"Yup," Sirius agreed. "As soon as sixth year started, stalker James was in full effect."

"Hey now! That's called romance!" James insisted.

Sirius nodded. "If you end up with the girl, then yes. If not, it's called illegal."

"Do I even want to know?" Lily asked her husband.

James shook his head. "Probably not."

"Romeo over here," Sirius explained despite James protests, "decided he needed to do some more recon, before beginning sending his soldier into battle. So for the first couple of weeks of school he snuck into your room and watched you sleep."

"What!" Lily exclaimed.

James bowed his massive helmeted head. "I love you."

"You watched me sleep?" Lily asked. "That's so creepy. And disgusting. Even for you."

James shrugged. "It was more boring than I expected it to be."

"I should hope so," Lily insisted unsure what the hell she was saying.

Sirius helpfully added, "So to pass the time he read your diary. Owww! Dammit Prongs!"

James eyes flared angrily. "Ix-nay on the iary-day!"

"My diary?" Lily asked confused. "You read my diary?"

James knew better than to answer that question.

"But I haven't kept a diary since I was about six," Lily stated watching her husband's confusion in the rear-view mirror. "Were you reading one of my dormmate's diaries?"

James shook his head. "No. Unless they named theirs Diary of an Unquenchable Vixen and kept it under your pillow."

Lily's eyes bulged out and a whole lot of things from a long time ago began to make a lot more sense. "That's why you kept asking me to sweep your room?"

James blushed at the reminder of his favorite entry.

Lily shook her head. "That was a romance novel, you dunderhead stalker."

Harry looked at his parents oddly. "Wow, Mum, Dad. This sure sounds like the love of legends."

James shrugged. "We'd known each other since we were scared eleven year olds. Love at first sight would be a bit creepy."

Sirius grinned. "Actually, if memory serves, I believe it nearly was at the start of sixth year, it wasn't the first sighting but it was practically instantaneous."

Remus smiled and jumped in. "I believe James' response at the opening feast went something like this: 'What the hell happened to

Evans this summer? She just shot like a rocket up the boinkability scale and sprouted a significantly yummalicious rack. Flat butt still although she is a redhead. So I guess I'd better bring a machete, because it's bound to be a jungle out there."

"James!" Lily admonished with a hidden smile. "Even back then, you thought my rack was yummy?"

James had that 'Hey, I was a teenage boy' look. "I'm not exactly going to stalk someone with an average rack, now am I?"

"Aww," Lily said while driving. "That's so sweet." Her pleasant approval lasted a full four seconds before, "Wait a minute. What do you mean a jungle?"

"I'd take a jungle over a sandy beach any day." Sirius offered as a non-answer.

Lily was even more confused. "What?"

Sirius elaborated, "Bare skin so rough it looks like a diseased rash. And then there's the crabs."

"So many young girls don't realize you must moisturize or you'll end up with red goose bumps within a couple days of skin irritation." Remus explained to all the young girls in the car.

"James," Lily said straightly and calmly. "Explain. Or else."

James tensed at the sudden seriousness of his wife. He knew the terror alert level just went up. "Err, you know... redheads like yourself aren't exactly well known for carefully trimmed hedges."

Lily watched him in the mirror.

"Well kept foliage." He added. "Tending to the garden."

Lily arched an eyebrow. "Are you trying to call me a 'ho'?"

“No!” James insisted. “Not at all! I’m just saying your pubes were all over place. Looked like you were giving Dumbledore’s chin a run for its money.”

A natural talent in Occlumency allowed Harry to keep his fear and horror hidden.

“So she is a natural redhead?” Sirius asked curiously.

James nodded. “Not even Moses ever saw a bush that flaming before.”

“James!” Lily scolded.

“Yes love?”

“Our son is right here!”

James looked at Harry’s pained face. “He’s seen it before. Hell, he came shooting out of it.”

Harry jumped in and argued, “Yes, well just because you’ve seen a man give birth to a puppy cesarean style, doesn’t make it okay to talk about it among pleasant company.”

“Oh good lord.” James said imagining the horror.

“Thank you, Harry.” Lily said looking worriedly at her son.

“Oh god.” Harry paled. “Is that why you named me that and not Harold?”

James and Lily both blushed and dropped their heads.

“No!” Harry’s frustrations burst forth.

James explained. “Well you were born with nearly a full head of wild black hair, and during the procedure... there were... tangles... with you and your mother.”

Lily smiled weakly. "The Healer said 'Wow, that is hairy,' and it sort of stuck."

"He was probably talking about your gaping vagina!" Harry indignantly claimed.

Lily frowned. "She was not. She had seen it many times before."

"Really?" James inquired with a smirk.

Lily sighed. "God you're a pervert."

James shrugged. "I'm a Potter. And you know, thinking about it, it's certainly possible she might have been talking about your gaping vagina."

"Thank you." Harry said with an appeased smile.

James nodded and turned towards his wife. "In which case, I suppose we could officially change your name to our first choice: Oglethorpe Pugsley Potter."

"Oh god." Harry realized these people should not have been responsible for naming him.

James was remembering all the names they liked, and the compromises they reached. "Well, our second favorite was Draco Ignatius Potter, though that did have the unfortunate initials dip."

Harry couldn't help silently throwing up in his mouth.

Lily nodded and agreed. "Don't forget I liked 'Tom Marvolo Potter' too."

Remus' eyes bugged out. "I forgot about that one. Umm... you might not want to suggest that particular name, Bessie."

"Why not?" Lily said with a furrowed brow. "I saw it on that special services plaque. It always sounded so regal and yet down to earth. I heard he was real cute too."

Remus carefully explained, "Cute? Well, he was very possibly the last person you saw before dying."

"Oh." Lily said as realization dawned on her. She smartly added, "Yeah, let's scratch that one."

"Guys!" Harry yelled at everyone in the Short Bus. "You know what? Being named after a gaping vagina isn't so bad. How bout we just stay quiet and try not to make me any more scared or nauseous before we get to the dealership. Okay?"

Lily nodded quietly, while all three men in helmets bowed their heads in shame.

The silence remained heavy in the car, broken only by the wheezing sounds of Sirius' air biscuit. This brought the nausea and fear back too.

CHAPTER ELEVEN

Harry rolled over and looked at his magical alarm clock. The odd birthday gift from Sirius was beginning to grow on him. The delightfully naked woodland nymph clock was barely a foot tall. She looked over her shoulder with a smoldering sultry grin. "Just because you didn't set the alarm doesn't mean you can't hit my snooze button."

Harry shook off his tiredness and smiled at her. "Maybe next time. I should probably get up now."

The clock grinned lecherously at him. "Don't let me stop you."

Harry frowned at her one track mind. "Would you turn around please?"

The nymph slapped her ass soundly and looked away. "Spoilsport."

As soon as Harry got out from under his sheets and stood up, the alarm clock started blaring loudly. Harry scrambled over to her and reluctantly pushed her snooze button several times before she finally shut up. "That's just not fair!" Harry complained.

The frustratingly gorgeous little vixen smirked. "Someone's got to toot my horn."

Harry grumbled as he went to his bathroom for a shower. It was quicker than usual as he was unable to shake off the feeling he was being watched. A short conversation with the clock about the pluses and minuses of sap as a lubricant followed before Harry finally got her to admit it was just after eight in the morning.

Harry walked into the kitchen and saw his father and godfather were both already up. "You guys are up early. Excited to start the school year?"

James smiled at his son. "Yup. We've been discussing the best reasons to take points from Slytherin."

"What do you think, Harry?" Sirius asked. He thinned his lips McGonagall's trademark way. "Ten points from Slytherin for your inability to be loved."

"Or," James loudly argued. "Ten points from Slytherin for spying on Professor Hagrid bathing."

Harry rolled his eyes. "You know you guys could try to be fair and do a good job."

James and Sirius just shared a look that said, 'there's a crazy person in the room and it's not you or me.'

Sirius saw Harry was genuinely holding out hope. "Who knows? Maybe we will."

"Right," Harry chuckled and saw how pleased these two were looking. "I'll warn you right now, if I see any prank that I think goes too far, I'm going to stop it."

James looked shocked. "Us? Prank? We would never-" James couldn't even pretend anymore and just talked normally. "Okay fine. Besides we can only kill old Snivelly once, so it can't be too bad."

Harry shook his head, fearing what these two must have been up early preparing. "I'll tell you this much, Severus is either going to hide during the feast or be expecting something. You'll probably scare him more if you don't do anything. Except maybe smile at him often and pass him food."

Sirius looked over at James. "Dammit." He frowned. "Bugger's right. It will be more fun to just watch Snivellus, because you know he'll be on high alert."

James frowned. "Griphook won't be happy after eating all that fiber and taking those laxatives."

"We can use that stuff later," Sirius stated. "It's not like we're never going to need runny goblin-de-goop."

James nodded. "I suppose I should cancel the strippers too."

Sirius agreed. "Though you may be breaking that poor little Creevy boy's heart. I get the feeling he doesn't get a whole lot of work."

Harry looked at the two father figures in his life. "You guys paint quite a mental picture."

James grinned while Sirius' broad smile faltered and wondered if they were called 'mental' there.

"Anyways," Harry delighted in his confusion. "Have you eaten breakfast?"

"Yeah, no thanks to you," Sirius replied. "There was hardly any food left!"

"I thought we'd go out for breakfast, before heading towards the school for our 11 o'clock meeting." Harry defended. "We're not going to be living here all that often anyways."

"Yes, well, we just wanted some scrambled eggs and I was shocked and appalled that you didn't have any." James sighed. "Luckily Sirius told me about how good ostrich eggs can be, so we helped ourselves to your last one."

"Err... ostrich eggs? Was this by chance one that Moony gave to you?" Harry asked.

Sirius shook his head. "Not eggs plural. Just one egg was plenty for the two of us. It was the one on the shelf over the microwave."

Harry furrowed his brow and looked at the empty shelf before his eyes bugged out. "You didn't!"

James and Sirius were patting their bellies. "Sure did. Needed some ketchup, because even scrambled it was a bit spicy."

“Why?” Sirius added. “Were you saving that one for a special occasion?”

Harry was stuck between disheartened and shocked. “What in the world made you think that was an ostrich egg? Do most people keep ostrich eggs around?”

Sirius was proud to demonstrate his knowledge. “On one of my little jaunts across the world, I learned that those large eggs with specks of black were ostrich eggs. Err, aren’t they?”

“That wasn’t an ostrich egg, you knuckleheads.” Harry sighed as he sat down.

“What was it then?” James asked.

Harry looked up at them sadly. “That was Fawkes’ egg, which had been semi-blessed by a dementor. I figured if I gave it enough time, I might snag me a pretty damn cool pet or familiar.”

James eeped. “That was a phoenix egg!”

Harry nodded. “Yup.”

“You know what else it was?” Sirius grinned.

“What?” Harry asked.

“Delicious!”

Harry groaned knowing he’d walked into that one.

James nodded eagerly. “It was quite tasty. You know if Fawkes’ has laid any more?”

Harry smiled. “Umm, dad? You know when Albus hit her with that fire hose charm? She was just a little irritated then. What do you think she’s going to do when she finds out you ate her egg?”

Sirius paled, while James sat there thinking deeply. “Well, she is a phoenix, so probably nothing to me for my honest mistake. Although when she hears you were just leaving it around on a shelf in the kitchen, she may claw your eyes out.”

Harry frowned and suddenly became very wary of informing Fawkes of their little accidental misunderstanding. He somehow doubted the assurance that it was quite tasty would be appreciated. “Maybe we should just keep this to ourselves.”

Sirius nodded. “Sounds like a plan to me.”

The nervous and twitchy little first years all lined up and stood there waiting. They could only watch in confusion while the stern lady introduced as Professor McGonagall wrestled with what appeared to be a dirty old hat.

“Stop it!” She scolded. “Give me that bottle.”

All the ickle firsties gasped when the Hat held on tightly to its beverage and yelled back through a mouth biting down on the bottle. “No! I need it! You don’t understand!”

“This is completely unacceptable behavior, you stupid hat!” She sternly ordered ripping the bottle from its mouth. “Now you will sing your song or so help me, I’ll transfigure you into a lemon drop! And you know what that means!”

The Hat hiccupped and followed that up with a loud belch. Its pointed tip was curling lazily as it just now noticed all the frightened looking first years. It twisted itself around and looked up at the Head table. “Ahhhhhhh! We’re all gonna die!”

The older students were well familiar with the warnings the Sorting Hat gave during the last rise of evil, and perhaps placed a little too much faith in its powers of precognition. Naturally, the Hufflepuffs began screaming first.

“We’re doomed! It’s all over! Save yourselves!” the Hat continued screaming. “The sky is falling! There’s no tomorrow! We’re dead! We’re already dead!” It is highly possible the Hat would have

continued on a while longer had Professor McGonagall not thrust her hand over its mouth and muffled its fervent panicking.

The majority of the student body was either screaming in fright or looking at the others stupidly. It took three tries of the Headmaster calling for silence before they all quieted down.

Professor McGonagall glared at the Hat until it stopped struggling and looked right back at her. "Now are you going to do your job, the only purpose for your existence, or are you going to spend the rest of your life as Fang's favorite chew toy?"

The Hat said nothing and sat there silently.

The lack of resistance, the Deputy Headmistress interpreted as compliance and she slowly and carefully removed her hand from the Hat's mouth. She relaxed momentarily, thinking the Hat had finally seen reason.

"Game over man! Game over! They're already here and there's nothing we can do! We're doomed!" It yelled out struggling against the Transfiguration Professor's grip. "Doomed I tell you! Doomed!"

"Oh for the love of Merlin," She sighed and cast a localized silencing charm around the area. She wasn't sure she could silence the hat, but she could at least keep the sound confined in its area.

Albus had now stepped down from the Head table and was approaching Minerva to help. "Problems, Professor?"

There were moments when the Deputy Headmistress found the Headmaster's gift for understatement endearing. This was clearly not one of those moments. "You fix this. I'm having a drink." She finished resolutely and stormed up to her seat.

Albus tried to hide his smile and saw a number of amused faces in the crowd to go along with the pale looks of terror on others.

Albus stood there staring at the Hat waiting until it stopped its silent screaming. After tiring itself, it finally closed its mouth and just looked

back at the Headmaster. Albus calmly asked, "Alright, how about a compromise? We will forego the song and you can just sort the students. Can you handle that?"

When the Hat made no motion to either begin screaming again or nod in agreement, Albus stated, "Okay, I'm going to remove the silencing charm now and we'll call up the first student."

A small motion of from Albus' wand and the Hat yelled yet again. "Don't let them take you alive!" It then proceeded to arch its tip forward into its own mouth and began biting viciously.

"Stop it!" Albus ordered. "Stop eating yourself!"

Muffled gobbling was the only response Albus got to his demands.

"No!" Albus insisted as he tried to tug the top of the hat out of its mouth. "That's a bad Hat! Bad!"

"Heads up, Albus!" Harry called out and chucked a bottle towards him. The Headmaster grabbed the bottle out of the air and began to pour the liquid into the Hat's chattering mouth. It slowly relaxed and Albus was able to safely swap out its own tip for the bottle of alcohol. The Hat calmly nursed on the bottle until it had finally passed out, and a long string of drool was dripping off the brim.

Albus sighed. "Oh dear." He looked over at all the amused and frightened faces. He addressed the absolutely terrified unsorted first years. "Well, we still need to sort you."

"I'll do it, Headmaster!" a way too excited voice at the Head table cheered.

Another voice firmly added, "Take a seat, Albus. We got it from here."

The Headmaster looked up and saw Professor Padfoot taking the list of student names from Minerva, while Professor Prongs hurried up to them. "Welcome to Hogwarts, little people!"

"Professor Prongs," Albus frowned. "I can't just let you-"

“Relax Headmaster,” Sirius grinned. “We’re here to help. If there are any problems we’ll sober up the Sorting Hat and force a re-sort later. But right now we’ve got to assign them to some house and Professor Prongsy and I volunteered to take up that responsibility ourselves.”

“We’ll make sure there’s an even amount of all four houses.” James explained and insisted childishly, “Besides, we called it first so we got dibs.”

Albus looked up at all the uncertain faces among his staff and then looked at the cowering first years. Albus shrugged and complied. “Meh. Go for it.” He looked back at the eleven year olds. “And if any of you students after a week of being in your new house feel horribly out of place just tell your Head of House or myself, and we’ll get you re-sorted.”

The students all nodded, still a bit confused.

The Headmaster went back up to his seat so that his Potions Professor could yell at him quietly. He got himself the same drink as his Deputy Headmistress, except his had a pretty pink umbrella.

Sirius grinned at all the little minds to corrupt. “Well, children, as my associate Professor Prongs already said welcome to Hogwarts! My name is Professor Padfoot.”

“Like the prank collector card?” a timid little girl in pigtails asked.

Sirius and James both nodded proudly.

“Damn you’re all small,” James intelligently pointed out. “Alright. Who wants to go first?”

All the eleven year olds looked at each other nervously. Finally, a small brown-haired boy said, “I will, sir.”

“Excellent!” Sirius grinned before making a dramatic flourish and bellowing loudly “Gryffindor!”

James nodded and clapped. "I highly agree. And that happens to be the House I'm helping out with." The Gryffindor table began slowly applauding their newest member, unsure if that really counted or not. James encouraged him. "Go on over to your house table son. Congratulations!"

"Oh wait!" Sirius asked looking at his list. "What's your name?" The young man settled himself into an empty seat and called back, "Arnold Muggle!"

"Oooh," Sirius cringed as he put a G by his name. "That would've been a bad one for Slytherin."

James nodded. "And you know if he ever gets a girlfriend she's going to get called a Muggle-lover."

There were quite a few chuckles at that, though apparently Arnold wasn't ready to hit the meat market yet, given the utter look of distaste on his face at the thought of a girlfriend. Either that or the name brought up some painful childhood memories.

"Okay," James said. "Who's next?"

"I'll go, sir." A proud blonde boy said as he walked up towards the two odd Professors.

"Well, only the first one pulls off the automatic courage vote," Sirius explained. "Have a seat on the stool. So why don't you tell us something about yourself?"

The now nervous youngster sat down. "My name is Nathaniel Webster. Umm... I love Quidditch. My parents both went to Hogwarts. Dad was a Gryffindor, mom was a Ravenclaw. I've got a little brother... and... what else do you want to know?"

James looked at Sirius. "This could take a while."

Sirius asked, "Do you like to read?"

The blonde boy considered the question and nodded slightly.

“Ravenclaw!” Sirius cheered. The Ravenclaw table caught on quickly and began applauding their newest member who hurried over to his new house.

Sirius put an R by young Mr. Webster’s name. “Alright, we should speed this up. You, in the back, four eyes!”

A scared boy in glasses pointed at himself and asked, “Me?”

“Ravenclaw!”

The boy looked around nervously and just hurried over to his new house table.

Sirius asked, “Are there any purebloods here who are proud to be pureblood?”

Three hands were raised. “Slytherin! Slytherin! Sl-... err, is that red your natural hair color?”

“Yes sir,” a timid voice replied.

“Gryffindor!”

James caught on and walked up to an especially scared looking girl. He pretended to punch her right in the face but stopped himself just short of making contact. She flinched violently and fell backwards.

“Hufflepuff!” James announced.

Sirius pumped his fist. “Yes! One for my house!”

James pointed to a boy in the back. “Is that hair gel in your hair?”

“Err... yeah?”

James and Sirius looked at each other and bellowed out together, “Slytherin!”

Sirius looked at the remaining scared faces. "Did anyone bring a favorite stuffed animal from home with you?"

Two girls raised their hands.

"Hufflepuff! Hufflepuff!"

"Has anyone read Hogwarts: A History?"

Two more hands went up. "Ravenclaw! Ravenclaw!"

"Anyone know the Hogwarts' motto?"

One boy seemed to jump to attention. "Never tickle a sleeping dragon, sir!"

Sirius was surprised by the authority the boy seemed to yell his answer with. "Do you want to go into Gryffindor?"

"Sure."

"Gryffindor!" Sirius happily bellowed out.

"Can anyone here shoot milk out their nose?"

When a boy happily raised his hand, Sirius pointed right at him and yelled, "Hufflepuff!"

"Is anyone here offended by our methods for sorting you?"

When a stern looking little girl raised her hand, James yelled "Ravenclaw!" at her.

"You in the back, scowling at us! Slytherin!"

They continued on whittling them down until each of the four houses had about a dozen new students, and there were only about eight left in front of the Professors. James started sniffing something in the air. "Alright... who farted?"

A wide-eyed blonde girl eeped, while the brunette girl next to her pointed and insisted, "It was Professor Padfoot!"

Sirius grinned and shrugged. "Tattle-tale! Slytherin!"

James put his hand in the air. "How many fingers am I holding up?"

"Duh... two?"

"Ravenclaw!"

Sirius raised his hand. "And how many am I holding up?"

The wide-eyed blonde eeped again and gasped. "You're not supposed to raise that finger!"

"Hufflepuff!"

"I'm telling my mom on you!"

"Gryffindor!"

"Wait till my father hears of this!"

"Slytherin!"

They were down to the last four and Sirius pointed at a slightly chubby boy. "Quick, pick a number from one to ten."

"Twenty-seven!"

Sirius blinked at his odd choice. "Gryffindor!"

James pointed at the last little girl. "Your turn. Pick a number between one and ten."

"5.5, sir."

James rolled his eyes. "Ravenclaw!"

Sirius pointed to the second to last boy. "Pick a number."

The boy was wringing his hands and nervously asked, "Do I have to pick just one?"

"Hufflepuff!"

"This is stupid," the last boy complained.

"Slytherin!" James and Sirius victoriously cheered sorting the final student. The entire hall seemed to be enjoying this year's sorting ceremony more than usual, and they all jumped up and applauded. James picked up the stool as he and Sirius went back to their seats at the Head Table.

The Headmaster stood up and addressed the excited gaggle of students completely unaware of the three toothpick umbrellas stuck in his beard. "Yes, yes thank you Professors Prongs and Padfoot for such a unique sorting experience. But before we go any further, let's get some grub in our bellies. Tuck in!" A clap of the hands and the tables were filled with foods, though remarkably less magical oregano than last year.

Sirius sat down next to Harry, and grinned at the Headmaster. "See that Albus? I think we may have pulled off one of the quickest sortings ever!"

"I must say," the Headmaster reluctantly admitted. "That I found myself agreeing with almost all of your assessments. Though I think you may have done as much for bridging the boundaries and unifying the Houses as Severus has."

"Hey!" an irritated Potions Master complained. "I'm right here you know."

Albus nodded at Professor Snape as his eyes' twinkled. "Brilliant observational skills as always, Professor."

Even Draco chuckled at Severus, and was rewarded with smack to the back of his head. Harry leaned forward and asked the Headmaster, "Does this mean we all get to smack our apprentices?"

The Headmaster nodded as Sirius leaned over and whispered, "Dammit Harry, don't you get any- OWW!" Sirius moaned clutching the back of his head that Harry had smacked.

Harry grinned. "Just practicing."

Severus leaned forward, "It is nice, isn't it?"

Harry nodded back at him. "Quite."

Sirius snarled before adopting an evil grin. "Tell me, Professor Snape. How are the bangers and mash?"

Severus had been casting magical detection charms on everything within reach of him all night and stuck his nose in the air, pointedly ignoring Professor Padfoot and enjoying his meal.

Sirius turned back to James and loudly asked, "Professor Prongs? Tell me is there any magic in elephant laxatives?"

Severus slowly swallowed the food in his mouth and set his fork down.

"Or Cyanide?"

Severus pushed his entire plate away and took a drink of water.

"How about ipecac syrup?"

Now Professor Snape was suddenly full and no longer thirsty. He'd contact house elves later when the coast was a bit clearer.

Professor Prongs smiled widely. "You know, I don't think there's anything magical in any of those. Unless of course you wanted to put something magical extra into them. But the only purpose I can imagine for that would be to make them easily detectable by magical

scans. Assuming you're dealing with someone so paranoid and neurotic enough to scan everything they eat."

"It is sad how little faith in humanity some people have." Sirius said shaking his head.

James shrugged. "Some people can never let go of childhood grudges and spend their lives looking over their shoulders."

"I really pity those people." Sirius agreed. "You'd think eventually they would have to grow up."

"You would think that, wouldn't you?" James nodded. "But some of them are so beyond delusional they think the world revolves around them and they feel no need to grow up."

A silent Head of Slytherin House was beginning to purple in anger, but wasn't going to give in by acting like he noticed their loud conversation.

Of course, everyone else at the Head table had noticed. They were all snickering into their napkins and beginning to place bets on when Severus was going to explode, though truthfully many of them didn't quite understand why.

"You think maybe God punishes those sorts of people?" Sirius asked solemnly.

"Like what?" James asked. "Like by bringing back long dead enemies to torment them for their crimes against humanity?"

"Nothing quite as overt as that," Sirius retorted. "I'd think you'd have to be a pretty damn awful, horrible, rotten, wretched person if God's going that far. I was thinking more along the lines of taking away their fashion sense, their sense of humor," Sirius considered. "Maybe giving them a hook nose."

"Hey now!" Albus interrupted bending his nose tip up a bit.

“Oh excuse me Headmaster,” Sirius grinned brightly. “We were merely speaking hypothetically here, no offense intended. Why you have a great sense of humor!”

“And your nose is...” James stopped. “Rather your taste in robes is...” He paused again and heartily added, “Excellent sense of humor indeed, Professor Padfoot.”

Albus narrowed his eyes at the two innocent looks he was receiving from Professors Prongs and Padfoot.

As dinner was winding down, and bellies were filling up, the desserts arrived including a surprising new offering for a tasty way to finish off their meal.

“Hey! Cracker Jack!” an excited young Gryffindor yelled. “My American cousin bought me these at a baseball match! They’re really good!”

“What are they?” a newly sorted first year Gryffindor boy asked.

The excited second year explained, “Popcorn inside toffee, or toffee coated popcorn. But with nuts!”

“I love nuts!” A naïve first year girl cheered.

A fourth year reached out, “Give me a box. That sounds pretty good.”

“And the best part is that in every box there’s a prize!”

“What kind of prize?”

“Well it varies in every box, you just have to open your box and see what you got. And just so you know, the nuts are always settled down at the bottom.”

“Wow!” a first year boy cheered.

“What? What’d you get?” the girl next to him asked.

“Temporary tattoos!”

“Whoa!” the entire table said in awe.

“Hey I got... oh. Just some cheap plastic ring.”

The second year chuckled. “Yeah, I’ve gotten that a few times.”

“Sweet!” an overly excited fourth year Hufflepuff cheered.

His friends huddled around him eagerly. “What? What’d you get?”

“Check this out!” He lifted up his official certificate. “I’m a Potions Master!”

“No way!”

“I want one!”

“Hey, I’m a Potions Master too!”

“Yeah, me too!”

“Think this means we can get out of cooking class?”

Severus took careful note of the young man who said that last remark.

Professor Prongs was munching on the toffee-coated popcorn. “I know Professor Malfoy is working on his the hard way, but how did you get your mastery Professor Snape?”

Severus hissed back angrily. “This isn’t over, Po-ahhhhuugh. Prongs.”

“It really is that easy?” Draco pouted at his Master. “That’s so unfair! I’ve wasted two bloody years now and I-” A quick smack to the back of the head assured Draco it wasn’t quite that easy.

Professor Dumbledore stood up. “May I have your attention for a moment please? I have a few announcements and introductions to

make. Professor Snape has been all smiles about having an apprentice assist him in his duties and classroom,” Albus explained ignoring the titters from the crowd and harsh scowling from his ‘all smiles’ professor. “As such, this year, all four Heads of Houses have taken on apprentices to assist them this year. Under Professor McGonagall and within the Gryffindor House, you have already witnessed the sorting skills of Professor Prongs. With Ravenclaw, apprenticing to Professor Flitwick will be Professor Bessie. And joining the Hufflepuff House under Professor Potter will be his apprentice Professor Padfoot. I trust you will make them all feel welcome.

“Miss Tonks has made no additions to the list of restricted items as apparently, and I quote, ‘You’re going to need all the help you can get this year.’ The Forbidden Forest for the first time will not be off-limits as per usual. Instead it will be serving as a suicide booth for those students unable to cope-”

“Albus!” Minerva scolded. “Stop it! We were not serious when we voted on that!” She quickly turned to her colleague and hissed, “And Professor Padfoot, shut the hell up!”

“Whoops,” Albus blushed. “Excuse me. The Forbidden Forest is in fact still forbidden hence the same old name.” Albus sighed disappointed. “Prefects please lead the students back to your common rooms and welcome to another memorable year at Hogwarts.”

Severus hurried out of the Great Hall, refusing to allow himself to be mocked any further by those freakish zombies.

Sirius looked at James. “Did you see his face when that kid wouldn’t trade a temporary tattoo for a Potions Mastery?”

James grinned brightly back. “I especially liked it when he gave him a plastic ring instead and told him he could keep the Potions Mastery. I believe the fine upstanding young man’s words were ‘I need a real job not rubbish.’”

Sirius grinned at his godson. "You've been teaching them well, Harry."

"Cracker Jack?" Harry asked. "You actually got cases of that stuff together and made fake prizes?"

Sirius looked at James and back at Harry. "Err... that wasn't you?"

Harry shook his head at the confused looks at the two men's faces.

Lily leaned forward towards her co-workers with a wicked smile. "Miss Bessie must earn her spots."

James hungrily looked over at his wife. "God you're sexy!"

"Emotionally damaging, attacking the pride without anything physically harmful or dangerous," Harry assessed. "Excellent choice Miss Bessie. Mr. Omega highly approves."

She proudly curtsied and pointed out, "I doubt these two knuckleheads could come up with something so muggle and I knew if it failed I was just giving the kids an option for dessert." She gave her husband a chaste kiss. "And now if you'll excuse, Filius is going to introduce me to my Ravensclaws."

James grinned. "I doubt Minnie will be doing anything so formal, so I think I'll check out the old common room and find us some young pranksters."

Harry smiled at his godfather. "Are you ready to meet our little puffers?"

Sirius nodded and the pair made their way into the bustling common room. Harry entered the room and saw they were all hanging out waiting on him. "Welcome back, puffers!"

"Greetings, poofters!" Sirius happily chimed.

"Puffers, Padfoot, puffers." Harry corrected with a frown.

A smiling fourth year jumped in, "Well actually, I-"

"Not right now, Herman," Harry interrupted. "Maybe later." He turned towards the rest of the House. "I wanted you all to meet, my apprentice, Professor Padfoot," Harry introduced. "Professor Padfoot, this is the Hufflepuff common room and all the current members of Hufflepuff."

"Sweet!" Sirius cheered. "Padded walls!" Before Harry could stop him, Sirius ran full tilt right into the nearest wall and knocked himself backwards.

The entire house was laughing at the enthusiastic new Professor. Sirius was rubbing his head as apparently the experience was not as pleasant as he was expecting. "Oww..."

"Yeah," Harry rolled his eyes. "I think maybe you should-"

"You're right!" Sirius replied. "I'm going to get my helmet."

"Wait!" Harry stopped him. "I was actually going to suggest you should avoid running full speed in the wall."

Sirius looked over at the Hufflepuffs and back to his godson. "Well... where's the fun in that?"

"That's what I'm saying!" Herman forcefully agreed.

Harry shook his head. "Maybe later then, Professor Padfoot," Harry said putting extra emphasis on the word that indicated a mature role model and voice of reason.

"Alright," Sirius reluctantly agreed. He looked over at the students. "So how you guys all doing?"

"Great!" they seemed to cheer back in unison.

"You like having Professor Potter here as your head of house?"

"Yeah!" they excitedly agreed.

“How’s your Quidditch team?”

This time only seventh year Darren Cobb excitedly yelled back, “We suck!”

“Well at least you’re honest about it,” Sirius cheerfully pointed out. “My name is Professor Padfoot, but you all can just call me Padfoot or Paddy if you like.”

“Is that like Potty?” a second year girl asked.

Sirius looked over at Harry for help.

Harry smiled and shook his head. “No, not like Potty. It’s just another nickname for my miscreant apprentice. But I wanted you all to get to know him, as Paddy here may not act like it, but he is an adult, and you can come to him with any problems or ask him anything you like.”

Sirius grinned and nodded. “Anything you want to know?”

A sixth year boy stood up. “How’d you get to be Professor Potter’s apprentice? Because I mean, you’re like... older than him.”

“Well,” Sirius began. “I suppose the main reason would be the Headmaster got really drunk and thought it would be a good idea.”

Harry nodded at the inquiring looks sent his way.

“It’s also because I, Professor Prongs, and Professor Bessie are all close personal friends of the young Mr. Potter here.” Sirius elaborated. “And he wouldn’t trust us alone in one of his homes, so we all took the jobs apprenticing here.”

“Why does Professor Prongs look so much like Professor Potter?” A young girl asked.

Sirius looked at Harry. “Err... Harry? You want to field this one?”

Harry looked at all the confused faces and explained. "Well, I'm not entirely sure, but I would guess it's mainly because Professor Bessie is another of those fangirls like totally, completely obsessed and in love with me," Harry calmly continued ignoring Sirius' loud snort. "And you see, Professor Prongs and Professor Bessie are married, so I bet she's forcing him to try and copy me."

"Really?" the girl asked.

Harry shook his head. "No, not really, but let's go with that for now."

"Are they really married?" Darren Cobb asked. "Because she's super hot."

Sirius just snickered and stated. "Yes, they are really married. But even if they weren't, she'd probably be all over Professor Potter's taut young body anyway."

Several boys groaned sadly, while Harry just snapped at angry glare at his godfather. "Alright, puffers, I think that's enough Professor Padfoot for tonight. You can always call for me or Dobby, or additionally Professor Padfoot now. G'night!" Harry grabbed his apprentice by the ear and dragged him out of the common room before he could say anything too psychologically damaging.

As soon as they were out of the room, Harry let go of Padfoot's ear and smacked him on the back of the head for good measure. Any further scolding was halted when Harry saw waiting there in the hallway, an angry glare he was really hoping to avoid.

Harry gulped loudly. "Hi Fawkes."

CHAPTER TWELVE

Harry saw the smug grin plastered on Sirius' face and smacked him in the head for good measure. He turned to the squatting, unhappy looking bird.

"So Fawkes..." Harry forced an innocent smile. "Still a phoenix, eh?"

With a vicious war cry she launched herself through the air straight at the young Defense Professor. She spread her wings wide and was leading with her claws right towards Harry's face. Before Harry even had a chance to react, the solid ground he was standing on sucked him in, up to his bellybutton, as the angry firebird flew inches over his head.

"Fawkes!" Harry begged. "Please! I'm sorry!"

She just turned right back around and launched herself at him again.

Harry hurriedly called a magical ring into Fawkes' path hoping to temporarily divert her, only to see her fire flash from just in front of the ring to just beyond it. Harry blinked. "Crap."

The moment she arrived and swung her claw to scratch him, the stone floor rippled again. Harry, still immobile and up to his waist in solid rock, was yanked sideways barely out of the path of her attack. Fawkes began angrily trilling loudly.

Sirius was hiding back against the wall, happily snickering at the whole episode.

Fawkes continued yammering on with her snappish warbled song.

Harry had his hands up to defend himself. "You know I don't speak-"

A strange ethereal trill began echoing through the hallway that had Harry whipping his head back and forth trying to identify the source of the second phoenix song. Fawkes trilled a response and seemed to be calming ever so slightly. The haunting sounding trill replied back

while the ground gently pushed Harry back up until he was standing with his own two feet on solid ground.

“Hogwarts?” Harry inquired. “Is that you?”

A brief chirp of a trill replied, and Harry could tell it was an affirmative. “You speak Phoenixia?” Harry stupidly pointed out. He whined, “That’s so unfair.”

Apparently Fawkes didn’t agree and puffed herself back up angrily eyeing Harry. She launched herself headfirst with her mouth open and tongue lolling out the side as she flew towards Harry. This time a solid chunk of rock shot out from the wall protecting Harry.

Fawkes merely fire flashed to the other end of the hall. She let out possibly her most irritated trill of the night and lunged back towards Harry, who closed his eyes and concentrated. His attempt unsuccessful, Harry moaned to the castle, “You’re not even letting me pop away? Do you want me to become Fawkes’ barbecue?”

Just as Fawkes was nearing, this time a massive portrait slid out from the solid stone wall separating Fawkes from Harry.

“I’ll save you, fair maiden!” an obnoxious voice echoed. “Halt you filthy scoundrel!”

“I’m not a maiden!” Harry insisted, before directing his attention towards the castle. “And Sir Cadogan? That’s who’s going to protect me?”

A silent conversation between Harry and the castle followed, ignoring Sir Cadogan’s calls of “Don’t make me slay you, oh feathered dragon!”

There was a high-pitched scream and vicious tear from top to bottom through the entire canvas. With a clear path, the angry phoenix went flying at Harry. Fawkes spread her wings and was again soaring belly-up with her legs spread.

Naturally the last thing Harry expected was bound to happen. Harry barely saw Fawkes' legs expand and contract before a phoenix egg was shot out from her at a speed Harry was entirely unprepared for. It smashed into him bruising his nose and spilling warm yolk all over his face. Harry hurriedly wiped off his eyes and mouth so that he could breathe. Harry complained. "Oh man that's grody."

Sirius was poking his head from down that hallway. "Nice shot Fawkes!"

Fawkes turned to look at Sirius and didn't seem especially pleased with him either.

Two quick fire flashes and Sirius looked around confused wondering what she did. A few moments later he didn't even need canine senses to realize the bottom of his robes were on fire.

Harry was mentally listening to Hogwarts. He rocked his head back in shock. "How would I do that?"

While Sirius was frantically putting out his robes, another sheet of molten rock came shooting out in front of Harry pinning him between a pair large stone walls. The two thick, malleable blocks of rock slid towards each other quickly and gave the appearance of squashing the Hufflepuff Head of House. The massive slabs melted into quick liquid and splashed into the floor leaving Harry standing there tingling.

He looked down at his arms and hands and couldn't believe that what he saw matched how he felt. "Am I made of stone?" the amazed young man asked rhetorically. He flexed his fingers and saw dust and specks of rock flaking away from his tensed knuckles. "This is bloody cool!" Harry lifted his left arm into the air quickly shifting it into his normal flesh, and then right back to stone. "Why didn't you tell me I could do this sooner?"

Even Fawkes was watching him half-amazed.

Harry grinned and got a kick out of the feeling of stone grinding when his face split into a smile. "Ahh sweetie," he cooed in response. "Who

wouldn't want to be part-castle? This is awesome!" The undeniable Marauder in him couldn't stop the pun from slipping out. "I rock!"

Harry dropped to his knees and loved the loud sound of stone smacking into stone. He balled his right hand into a fist and punched hard straight into the solid floor.

"Owwwww!" Harry screeched and began shaking his chipped, pained right hand. "God dammit! You tricked me! That's a bad ancient castle! And you Fawkes, I thought you were upset about those knuckleheads eating your egg. But you made your maternal instincts quite clear when you laid another one at about 35 miles per hour on my face!"

Fawkes eyes flashed dangerously.

"Eep!" Harry, the macho man of stone, intoned deeply.

Fawkes flew right up to him and began clawing and scratching at his face. On Hogwarts' telepathic nudge, Harry just stood there and took it, as being made of rock made him pretty safe from any excess anger or bursts of fire. The same could not be said for his robes though as Fawkes had exposed nearly his entire upper body and left shoulder. "Alright, Fawkes, I get it. It was about respect or something. Not the egg, I guess. Owww!" Harry flinched. "Careful around the eyes! Okay maybe it was about the egg. Sheesh, cut me some slack. You know you don't exactly have instruction manuals or decoder rings for people to decipher your chirping, you bloody overcooked Augurey!"

Fawkes abruptly stopped her therapeutic scratching and right away Harry feared he had gone too far. She fire flashed away from him, and stood on the hallway floor. Just staring angrily and scratching her claws on the ground like a bull readying to charge.

"Sorry?" Harry weakly added while taking a step back.

With another warbled cry she leapt into the air with her wings out and legs forward. Harry saw those plump little hips shimmy as she somehow yet again let fly the egg of war.

Now Harry had been feeling guilty about what happened to the first egg that Fawkes had entrusted to his care. The second egg that was still drying and getting caked into his hair he did not feel any guilt over. But maybe, Harry just thought this third egg was another chance, or another shot at proving himself worthy. And his magic was trying to react to save it. Or perhaps Magic itself was truly sentient, had a depraved sense of humor, and thought of Harry as its own special guinea pig. Either way, no one was expecting to see the egg that was flying straight towards Harry's uncovered chest to hit his body like a rock in a pond and just get swallowed into his abdomen sending gentle ripples through Harry's body.

Harry immediately began patting and poking his chest, a little disturbed to find it completely solid stone once again. He spun around wondering if the egg had simply passed straight through him and crashed into the floor. When Harry could find no sign, he asked the obvious question. "Umm... what just happened?"

Two amused and chuckling trills were chattering up a storm. Fawkes was clearly pleased now and nodded at Harry with something akin to a warm smile.

Harry relaxed briefly and shifted his body back into normal soft human flesh. "Whoa!" he gasped placing a hand over his belly. "What the hell... umm... Hogwarts?"

A silent response from the castle and Harry frowned curiously. "No, I don't feel the need to go number two."

Fawkes was bobbing her head up and down in obvious merriment.

Harry's eyes widened. "It could come out my what!" Harry began to sway, feeling dangerously light-headed. "Oh dear..."

He began mumbling to himself. "This isn't good."

Fawkes let out a joyous song for several seconds, and Harry could have sworn she winked at him. As she held the last note she vanished in ball of flame, leaving Harry alone to his worries and fears.

A quiet and unobtrusive voice from down the hall called out. "Umm... Harry?"

Harry shook his head and caught up with his surroundings. "Padfoot! I'm so sorry. I completely forgot you were here."

Padfoot stared at Harry with unblinking eyes. "I'm scared."

Harry laughed at him. "I get that pretty often."

"You know I like... love you and all that other girlie crud, right?"

Harry arched an eyebrow and nodded, while wandlessly repairing his robes.

"Good," Sirius nodded. "Because I'm sooooo glad I'm not you."

Harry smiled at his godfather. "I'm glad you're not me either. You're just too serious to be me." Harry finished respectfully sticking his tongue out.

"Good morning, Professor Lupin," Harry said seating himself at the head table for breakfast. "What brings you to Hogwarts today?"

"Do I need a reason to visit my friends?" Remus replied with a mock hurt look.

Harry glared at the goofy werewolf. "Yes. You do."

Remus rolled his eyes. "Fine. I thought I'd join you guys for breakfast and see if I could pick myself up a Potions Mastery."

Severus choked on the eggs he was swallowing. He glared at Remus and pouted. "You were supposed to be the nice one."

Remus felt guilty for a moment, but only until Sirius spoke up and mumbled, "And you're supposed to treat students fairly."

Lily mumbled, "And you're supposed to set an example."

James was still wiping the crust from his eyes, "And you're supposed to shower daily."

Neville snapped alertly to attention. "When did that become a rule?"

"Ignore them, Neville," Harry replied. "These three are probably as childish as Severus."

The Slytherin Head of House pouted quietly, "At least I'm alive."

Albus' hand whipped out and smacked the back of Severus' head. He smiled brightly. "You're quite right. That does feel good."

And Severus once again considered retirement. He knew he would never give them the satisfaction of that, but sometimes he dreamed of a world where they all died. Well, and stayed that way.

"So tell me, Harry," Remus grinned as he buttered his toast. "Lay any eggs last night?"

Harry groaned and slowly looked over at his apprentice. "You told him about that?"

Sirius looked around confused. "Of course I told him. Why would you ever think I wouldn't?"

Harry sighed and pleaded his apprentice, "Please don't tell anyone else."

"Tell anyone else what?" Tonks asked as she sat down for breakfast.

Remus grinned and replied, "That Harry's going to be passing a phoenix egg sized kidney stone."

"Thanks Remus," Harry said brimming with sarcasm.

Remus shrugged. "Well you only asked Padfoot not to tell anyone else."

"Tell anyone else what?" Hermione said as she took her seat at the head table.

Tonks turned to Hermione and explained, "Harry's got a massive kidney stone."

"Ouch," the History of Magic professor sympathized. "You know, Harry, muggles can send shockwaves at it that would shatter it into smaller pieces that are far less painful to push out your urethra."

Professor Malfoy gulped and swallowed the food in his mouth. "Egads Granger, don't mention Potter's peehole while we're eating sausage." He paused for a single beat and added, "On second thought, don't mention Potter's peehole ever."

Harry rolled his eyes and ignored Draco. "I don't think that's really an option for me. It's not exactly a normal kidney stone."

Remus grinned proudly. "Yes, this one is so big it's practically a puppy." He finished dangerously looking intently at Harry.

"Oh don't start, Remus," Harry begged.

"You see what happened?" Remus was shaking his finger scolding. "This is you getting what you deserve. I warned you, I told you not to... and now you're going to reap what you sow."

"Whatever," Harry mumbled and scathingly added, "Werewolf."

Remus just chuckled at Harry's bigotry. "So Tonks," Remus turned to the pink-haired caretaker. "Did I hear correctly in that you quit the Aurors?"

Tonks nodded.

"What?" Harry asked leaning forward. "You quit? So you could stay here and get called Mrs. Filch?"

Tonks shrugged. "Apparently they frowned on a third year of sabbatical. And all my old partners are jealous because I get more action here."

"So I've heard," Lily said looking at Tonks like a mother judging her son's girlfriend.

Tonks pointed at Harry. "It's his fault!"

Lily just arched an eyebrow and looked at Tonks.

Tonks defended herself. "All my old partners just sit around twiddling their thumbs with nothing to do because of him. He snatched up all the good ones."

Lily was stifling a giggle and looked over at her son. Harry was just shaking his head, well aware Tonks didn't realize what she was saying.

"I mean with Harry here at least," Tonks pleaded. "I've always got something to do, something to keep my hands busy. I'm always up for any kind of job even if it is just students Harry sends my way."

Harry choked on his juice. "Tonks, just stop. Please. I think you and Professor Bessie are talking about two very different types of action."

"Like what?" Tonks was confused and wracked her brain for some other 'type' of action. "Water sports?"

Lily couldn't hold in her giggles now, and even Harry was chuckling.

Remus raised his hand, "For what it's worth, I saw that coming a mile away."

"What are you talking about?" Tonks insisted. "Half our dates end with me dripping wet."

Harry just shook his head. "Eat your breakfast, Tonks."

“Oh,” she snapped angrily. “So now you’re telling me what to put in my mouth.”

“Miss Tonks,” Albus interrupted. “It’s too early for me to be picturing you dripping wet taking orders from Mr. Potter on what to put in your mouth.”

Tonks blushed violently, only now realizing what she had been saying.

“If you’d like at lunch,” Albus continued. “I could offer you several suggestions on things I’d like to see in your mouth but now is not the time.”

Before Tonks could even muster up the composure to respond to that, both Professors Prongs and Snape said at the exact same time, “I think I’m going to be sick.”

They both stopped immediately and snapped angry stares towards each other.

Professors Malfoy and Padfoot then at the exact same time laughed out loud at their friends’ responses before noticing their odd unison and stopped immediately giving each other confused stares.

The looks shared between the four were almost too much, but the awkward silence just hung there, as all four seemed scared to make a comment for fear of being eerily copied again.

Remus’ eyes were dancing with mirth at the entire situation. He decided to speak up before he ruined the mood unable to contain his giggles. “So really, Harry. Didn’t lay any eggs?”

“Professor Prongs!” Minerva scolded her apprentice. “My office. Now please.”

James stopped teaching the sixth years how to transfigure their robes into skimpy negligee, and Professor McGonagall told them to read pages 17-21 in their books.

James followed Minerva into her office. She spun right around. "Did you have anything to do with The Gryffindor Guide that's been confiscated from several students?"

The worried look left James' face and he smiled. "No, I didn't, but that sounds dead useful. What's in it?"

Minerva just kept the stern look on her face and handed him a small laminated card.

The Gryffindor Guide
Old tell young. Young learn.

- 1). Fire hot.
 - 2). Light good.
 - 3). Love Potter.
 - 4). Me no dumb.
 - 5). Breathe. Repeat.
- That is all. No more fingers.
- 6). Don't forget. Two hands

James flipped it over and saw a picture of a cross-eyed smiling lion with a bike helmet on. "What the hell is this?"

Minerva was not smiling. "That's what I'd like to know! I find this horribly offensive and damaging, especially to the first years who are all still adjusting to life away from home!"

James too, had at first been enraged. He was almost certain Snape was behind this. But James was reluctant to admit, that he recognized the signs from McGonagall whenever a prank had been funny enough to piss her off. He explained, "Snivellus."

Minerva frowned. "He is your colleague and you should refer-" Her scolding tone disappeared and she hurriedly asked, "Do you really think he did this?"

James frowned but nodded. "He probably thinks either me or Sirius did that Cracker Jack thing and just wants to make fun of us."

Minerva raised an eyebrow. "You expect me to believe that you weren't behind that?"

"It wasn't us!" James pleaded. "It was all..." James stopped suddenly unable to say more. He smiled brightly. "Hey, it still works! Our old loyalty oath to each other is still in effect."

"Your loyalty oath?" The Deputy Headmistress asked.

James nodded. "Part of being an official Marauder means you're unable to rat out another Marauder."

Minerva looked at him oddly. "Mr. Pettigrew?"

James frowned. "Oh yeah." He shook his head. "Nuts. The oath was only for snitching on pranks."

Minerva's face softened remembering the tragedy that befell her young former Gryffindors.

"Guess we should have expanded it to cover turning traitor and selling out our lives to the enemy trying so hard to hunt us down." James added with a nod, "And framing each other for murder and exiling them to prison."

Minerva's eyes rolled. "Guess so."

"Oh!" James remembered. "And we shouldn't be able to kidnap the other's children for dark resurrection rituals of our evil Master. That's got to be against some sort of rule."

Minerva nodded and helpfully offered, "Perhaps you should just have included loyalty into your loyalty oaths."

"Hey... yeah," James nodded. "That would have been a darn good idea there."

"Yes well," Minerva let a ghost of a smile flash across her face. "Old tell young. Young learn."

“Minnie!” James beamed a smile. “I do believe you made a joke!”

She sighed. “I’ve really fought it, but your son’s cheek is disturbingly virulent.”

James nodded proudly. “I think that’s the case with all Potter men.”

Minerva snorted. “I hope you are aware virulent means contagious or infectious.”

“Oh,” a surprised young man paused. “What was I thinking?”

“I sincerely doubt there’s anyone in the world who can tell you that.”

Just then, an angry Professor Padfoot burst into Minerva’s office. “Have you guys seen these Gryffindor Guides?”

“Padfoot,” James asked. “What was I just thinking?”

Padfoot looked at James oddly. “Mastication maybe? Or virile?”

“That’s it, virile! Thanks Padfoot.”

Minerva blinked. “You two are scary.” Minerva shook her head. “And yes, Professor Padfoot, we were just discussing The Gryffindor Guide.”

“Oh goody!” Sirius cheered. “So do we just want to hurt Snivelly’s pride? Or can we get him fired?”

Minerva sighed. “I’m not convinced Severus is even at fault here. To be honest with your surprising rebirth, I’ve no idea how he’s coping.”

“Oh come on,” James pleaded. “This has got to be Snivelly. And in the incredibly unlikely event that it’s not him, well, he’s probably overdue for some painful embarrassment anyway.”

Minerva shook her head. “I will talk to Albus and make sure these do not spread much further.”

“This is completely ridiculous Albus! You should never have endangered the students by allowing these demon zombies into the castle.” Severus ordered. “Now this ridiculous childish prank has forced me to endure sexual harassment from my own students!”

“Severus, honestly,” Albus chided. “Consoling a frightened student with a hug is sometimes necessary in your role of Head of House. You are to represent your students’ interests in a role similar to that of an honorary parent or guardian. It is not sexual harassment.”

Minerva entered the staff room and heard their argument. She went over to Filius and asked what was going on.

“Oh Minerva!” The tiny Charms Professor squeaked. “It seems the Gryffindor and Slytherin first years both received ‘guides’ to life at Hogwarts. I assume you’ve seen The Gryffindor Guide?”

Minerva nodded. “And you say the Slytherins received them as well?”

Filius chuckled and handed the Transfiguration Professor an ancient looking scroll with a dark green ribbon. “It appears the Ravensclaws and Hufflepuffs have been spared.”

Minerva listened curiously and unrolled the old parchment.

The Slytherin Manifesto

A Guidebook to accepting your failure as a person and living life as a Slytherin.

1). If you feel the urge to cry, as you most likely will quite frequently, scowl harshly and stalk away making your robe/cloak billow as much as possible. Locate your Head of House, and once you are certain no one else is around, only then may you and he/she embrace in a hug and you may let it out in private. Never speak of these encounters to anyone. Least of all your housemates.

SIDENOTE: If your Head of House tries to deny you a hug, use one of the coupons in the back of this booklet.

2). No matter how much you may wish to call someone a doodybrain, don’t. Use words like buffoon or simpleton. Slytherins do not say

doodybrain though nincompoop may be used sparingly without any emphasis on the poop. Welcome adjectives include good-for-nothing, imbecilic, insufferable, and they are ideally combined with a noun along the lines of dunderhead or fool.

3). If you smile, we will kill your pet. Smiling is not and never will be acceptable. Smirking is highly encouraged at appropriate times. And loud laughter will be permitted if someone from another house is grievously injured.

4). Wear clean underwear every day. You never know when you might get cursed, flipped upside-down, and the last thing you want is for your britches to be anything less than sparkling. Going commando is only ever permitted for females. In those cases refer to chapter three: Grooming and Shampooing Part II.

5). Friends are not permitted. You do not make friends and cannot make friends. Certain allies may be held in higher esteem than others, but they are not your friends. You are a Slytherin.

If you find being a lesser person difficult and are having trouble accepting the fact that you are a Slytherin, take some private time and carefully read through Appendix D: Why no one will ever like me and Appendix E: How to tolerate your fellow Slytherins

Minerva frowned harshly but was obviously fighting a chuckle. "Oh this is horrible."

Filius nodded but was obviously equally amused. "I confiscated this first page from a young girl I caught trying to owl her cat home." Filius explained. "She had spellotape pulling the corners of her mouth down, ensuring she wouldn't smile."

Minerva couldn't help but laugh now. "I hope she's doing alright."

Professor Flitwick was laughing too. "I left her after she'd taken a calming potion and was in Madame Pomphrey's care."

"I think we'll be going through a lot of those this year." Minnie snickered.

Filius nodded. "Until I found out about The Gryffindor Guide, I assumed this was the work of Professors Prongs and Padfoot."

Minerva agreed. "When I received a copy of that one, I thought it might have been them, but they were both quite incensed over it. I doubt they've even heard about this Slytherin Manifesto."

Two loudly laughing voices and horribly amused men made their way into the staff room.

Filius chuckled. "I think they may have found about the Manifesto."

"Sevvie!" Sirius cheered. "I've got a coupon here!"

Severus spun around and was hiding behind Albus. "Get away from me you mongrel! Take your bad touches with you!"

"Mongrel?" James asked with a wide grin. "I'm not sure that's a Slytherin approved term of endearment. Perhaps you mean imbecilic dunderhead?"

Draco was chuckling. "My, my. Professor Prongs seems quite the know-it-all for such a simpleton."

James paused. Tempted to laugh, but considering the Slytherin who said that, he wasn't sure if he was being playfully mocked or crudely insulted.

Albus had no such reservations and laughed at these living embodiments of the house stereotypes. "Please, settle yourselves. This is obviously a prank in poor taste, and you all should be ensuring your students and respective houses know it is just that: a joke."

Harry, who no one even noticed enter the staff room, had eyes that if you looked closely enough were twinkling to the tune of dueling banjos. "Really people. You're all adults. Perhaps you should act like one."

James, Sirius, and Severus all directed their attention towards Harry. In another show of eerie unison, they all exclaimed, "You!"

Harry noticed his amused mother's smile, and innocently replied. "Me? What have I done now?"

Three voices screeched, "You did this!"

Harry grinned. "Great minds thinking alike?"

James and Severus were exchanging angry looks and snarls, unable to agree or deny without committing some sort of personal cardinal sin. Sirius pleaded, "Harry! Come on. You don't prank Gryffindors! That's just uncalled for."

"Why not?" Harry asked. "Gryffindors usually can take a joke better than Slytherins. And I never said I had anything to do with this."

"Hey now!" Severus interrupted. "Don't go generalizing about Slytherins. They have better senses of humor than the mongoloid house of these insufferable buffoons!" He finished pointing his thumb towards James and Sirius.

Albus was biting his lip at Severus' unconscious but entirely expected choice of words.

James frowned. "Come on Harry. That's just plain rude."

Harry raised an eyebrow. "If you can't take a prank, you have no right to be pranking anyone back. Hell, even Severus was inwardly amused by his houses' unofficial Manifesto."

"I was not!" Severus insisted.

Harry smiled. "I can sense some emotions through your mark."

"Oh bite me," Severus pouted.

"Still," James maintained. "Picking on the Gryffies is just wrong."

Harry looked at his father carefully and replied. "I'm not too sure you can appreciate a good prank if it's on you."

“Oh hell no,” James said with a shake of his head. “I’ve got more pranking knowledge, experience and skill in my little finger, then you could ever hope to have.”

Harry’s smile faltered for a moment. “Is that a challenge?”

“Hell yes,” James insisted. “Marauder’s Honor Challenge!”

Harry shifted his posture into a more confrontational one and stood there straight looking at his father. “Accepted. Rules?”

James looked over at Sirius’ worried face and realized he might need some help. “We pick teams. All out pranking, until the victor accepts the loser’s surrender. No judges.”

Harry grinned. “Fair enough. As the challenged, I’ll even pass my choice and let you pick first.”

James was thinking his son was just way too cocky. He looked around and saw a whole lot of worried faces around the staff room. Lily came over to offer her support to her husband. “Alright, I’ll take Padfoot,” James selected. Lily frowned a little and considered changing who she should be supporting.

Harry nodded and said, “Albus.”

The headmaster grinned, and hurried to stand next to Harry. He was almost bouncing in excitement and continued gleefully clapping.

James wondered about Harry’s interesting first choice, but continued on regardless. “Remus.”

Harry expected that and saw the pout on his mother’s face. He still had a strategy in mind for his picks. “Hermione.”

“What’s that?” Hermione said as she and Remus entered the oddly tense staff room.

Harry grinned and smiled. "My honor as a Marauder has been challenged and the sides are being picked. So far you're with me and Albus."

"Err... alright," Hermione agreed and went to stand by him. "But if anything happens to my hair, I'm taking it out on you."

"Remus," James ordered. "You're over here. So far it's me, you, and Padfoot. And it's my pick."

Lily cleared her throat quite loudly while the three men huddled and had a quiet conversation. James looked up and smiled. "The Weasley twins."

"That's two," Harry pointed out.

Remus rolled his eyes. "They share one brain."

"Fine then," Harry shrugged. "Severus and Draco."

If anyone were paying close attention they would have seen the two Slytherins' pale skin tone turn a slight pink in embarrassment and excitement. The last time they got picked for anything it was usually to torture muggles which they were not particularly keen on doing.

James was certainly not going to object to having even more reason to prank those two. "That's fair."

Lily began stomping her foot. "Professor Prongs," she insisted. "Do you not see me here?"

James snapped his fingers. "That's right! Thanks honey. We pick Ginny Weasley."

Harry grinned a little. "Tonks."

"Sweet!" Tonks cheered and stood over next to her team. Hermione was looking at everyone selected and realized something exceptionally significant about every member of Harry's team.

James looked hopefully at Minerva, who was shaking her head viciously. "Don't even think about it," Minerva warned. James could see his wife was getting past irritated and into furious with anger. "We'll take Bessie."

Harry inclined his head at the safe pick. "Dobby!"

With a pop, Dobby appeared with a wicked smile. He began rubbing his hands together and restrained a cackle. "Yes, Master."

Remus' eyes lit up suddenly and he leaned in to whisper something fervently towards James. James face split into a victorious grin as he nodded in agreement. He smugly announced, "This will be our last pick for now, but we're taking..." James was pausing to drag out his son's anxiety as much as he could. "Nicholas Flamel."

CHAPTER THIRTEEN

“Someone say my name?” A grinning Nicholas Flamel appeared.

“Nicholas!” Sirius cheered. “You’re timing is impeccable as always.”

“How does he do that?” James asked with a smug grin. “With that all-seeing eye, Harry, you don’t stand a chance!”

Hermione began coughing violently while Draco and Severus utilized all of their Slytherin guile to remain stoic and unmoving. Albus clenched his eyes shut out of fear the twinkling may have blinded members of his staff. Harry began patting Hermione on the back. “You okay there, Hermione?”

She just looked at Harry in complete disbelief and tried to compose herself.

“How are you doing, shugah britches?” Nicholas said as he kissed his girlfriend on the cheek. “Need some water?”

Hermione shook her head. “No. No, I’m fine... just a tickle in my throat.”

“Careful now, Nicholas,” James warned with a bright smile. “You’re fraternizing with the enemy over there.”

“Oh? Albus finally bringing back the staff room mud wrestling?” Nicholas grinned brightly and was turning his head around looking for the pit.

Sirius blinked. “That’s a brilliant idea.”

“Err... no,” Remus said briefly imagining tiny Professor Flitwick suplex-slamming Hagrid into a massive pile of sludge. He shook his head to lose the image. “No. Professor Prongs here has challenged Professor Potter to something akin to a prank war.”

“Ahhh, okay.” Nicholas grinned. “So who else is on our team?”

James grinned and announced. "So far it's me, Professor Padfoot, Remus, the Weasley twins, Ginny, Professor Bessie, and you against Harry, Albus, your girlfriend, Severus, Draco, Tonks, and Dobby."

"This thing's an all out rumble, isn't it?" Nicholas asked with a raised eyebrow.

James grinned brightly. "I think you were our final draft pick, but we're reserving the right to add some free agents that are available."

"How 'bout it, Potter?" Sirius grinned challenging at his godson. "You have a final pick? Or are you just going to let those misfits with you, be the only ones subject to share in your embarrassment?"

Harry sat there thinking deeply, and was tapping his chin. "Not sure if he'll get involved, but I'll use my last pick on Bob."

"Ooooh," Sirius realized. "Maybe we should take dibs on Griphook."

Nicholas shook his head. "Don't bother. We won't get any outright assistance from the goblins going up against Boy Wonder."

"Nuts." James frowned.

Harry rolled his eyes. "If you feel you need even more help, I'll promise not to get any ideas, resources, or advice from any of my goblin friends."

James shook his head. "From where I'm standing, you're the one who needs more help, so by all means—"

Nicholas interrupted, "Err, Professor Prongs? I'd suggest we take advantage of that offer. No help from the goblins for him."

James shrugged and nodded. "If you say so."

"I do," Nicholas nodded and added mysteriously, "He's got enough hidden allies as it is."

Harry smiled and turned to his team. "Alright guys. Let's begin plotting these insufferable simpleton's demise." Harry turned to his father and looked entirely too innocent as he mockingly waved goodbye. Without any further motion, the ground beneath Harry, Albus, Hermione, Tonks, Draco, Severus, and Dobby sucked them up and they disappeared from the staff room without a sound.

Remus gulped at their overly dramatic exit. "Why do I suddenly feel like you've woken a sleeping giant?"

Nicholas sighed. "Let's hope he doesn't get any of those to help him."

"Oh come on guys," James pleaded. "We can take these jokers easy."

"Hah!" Minerva laughed loudly as she left the staff room.

"You busy Nicholas?" Sirius asked.

Nicholas shrugged. "Considering the ground just swallowed my girlfriend, my schedule has suddenly cleared up."

"Great!" Sirius cheered. "Then you can track down Ginny for us, while Remus informs the twins, and how about we meet up tonight around 8 to nail down a plan of attack?"

"Works for me," Nicholas nodded. "I'll catch up with you lovely ladies later." Nicholas grinned. "You too, Professor Bessie."

Draco saw they reappeared in an empty room that he didn't recognize. "I must humbly beg your forgiveness, but... bwahahahahaha."

Albus, Hermione, Tonks, and even Severus quickly joined the young Malfoy in letting out all that laughter they had been holding in. Dobby wasn't laughing but the smile on his face would have scared the Dark Lord.

"Oh Merlin Potter," Draco chuckled. "That may have been just about the most devious thing I've ever seen you do. And that's saying something."

Harry was grinning brightly. "I must admit that it did work out quite well, don't you think?"

Severus' eyes were actually full of mirth. "You have got to let me get one over on your ruddy zombie parents."

Harry nodded. "I think that could be arranged."

Albus was shaking his head. "Oh heavens Harry, I nearly squeaked out loud when Prongs picked Nicholas Flamel."

"Yes," Harry admitted proudly. "It was almost as satisfying as when Nicholas was chosen by the Order to lead the manhunt for Harry Potter."

Albus suddenly didn't find it quite so funny.

Draco snickered loudly and pointed at the Headmaster.

"Oh shush, Death Eater," Albus pouted.

Hermione looked at Harry appraisingly. "So does this mean we'll get fair notice of all their pranks, so we can prepare and react accordingly?"

Harry shrugged. "We'll have to see. Like any good spy though, he's going to have to successfully prank you all at least a few times. But something tells me that we'll probably end up getting them a bit more than they get us."

"Who else even knows that you're Nicholas Flamel?" Hermione asked.

Harry shook his head. "All the wizards who know are in this room."

"Where are we anyway?" Severus asked looked around the musty room. "It feels very... homey."

Harry laughed. "Merlin you're a dork. We're in what used to be the advanced Potions laboratory. Your office connects to that door,"

Harry said pointing to his left. "And your main classroom is through there."

"You stole my room!" Severus whined.

Harry rolled his eyes. "And you were teaching over there before I knew magic was even real."

"Oh... right," a mollified Severus remembered. "So how'd you find it?"

Hermione smiled. "Hogwarts?"

Harry nodded. "Yup. I went ahead and laid claim to a half dozen forgotten rooms. I figured this would be the best place to meet up, considering before me I think it was a teacher in the fourteenth century who died taking the secret of the advanced lab with her."

"Can we get back here?" Draco asked, checking out the possibility of setting up some potion brewing work stations.

Harry nodded. "Now that you know it's here, you'll be able to see the doors from your office or classroom."

"Fidelius?" Albus asked curiously.

Harry shook his head. "I don't think so. Don't exactly recognize it to be honest, but it's possible it's some early derivation of the Fidelius considering its age."

Tonks seemed to be bouncing. "So are we going to plan some massive totally evil vindictive prank or what?"

Harry grinned. "I'm open to any ideas, but I think it might be more fun if we stay somewhat reactionary to my dad's failed pranks. Maybe stealing an idea or two from them. And implementing those pranks on them before they get a chance to do on us. As well as passively countering anything they do and acting like we don't notice it. I think that'll infuriate them even more."

Tonks frowned. "Oh fine."

“Hey now,” Harry retorted. “If you have any ideas, we’re definitely open to them, and we’ve got an inside man. You know, actually, I think I may want to borrow you and Draco this evening, just to keep them on their toes.”

Draco grinned happily in a move entirely unbecoming of a Slytherin. Severus noticed and smacked him on the back of the head.

“Anyways,” Harry said. “Why don’t we play it by ear for now?”

They all agreed and nodded.

“And if you don’t mind, I would like a private word with Albus. Though for now, let’s consider this our home base. If we have anything particularly destructive we need to practice we can use the Chamber of Secrets, but that’s not exactly as convenient to reach.”

Hermione, Draco, Severus, and Tonks all agreed, leaving Harry, Albus, and Dobby alone.

“Master?” Dobby asked. “Would you like me to leave?”

Harry grinned at his apprentice. “I know you’re just going to be spying on us anyways, so I guess it’s up to Albus.”

Albus rolled his eyes. “What is it you wanted to talk to me about?”

Harry looked at the Headmaster condescendingly. He waited a while just watching the old man. After staring him down sufficiently, he looked him in the eyes. “I must ask you, Albus, whether there is anything you’d like to tell me,” Harry’s eyes were set to mild twinkle. “Anything at all?”

“No.” The Headmaster dropped his gaze and looked away. “There isn’t anything, Professor...”

Harry snickered. “Right... so I take it, I’m going to be getting the full blame for the Gryffindor Guide and the Slytherin Manifesto?”

The Headmaster had the decency to blush and look back at Harry.

"Relax, old man," Harry smiled. "I was wondering if you needed help with Ravenclaw's and Hufflepuff's."

Albus nodded eagerly. "Certainly. Just those two were a lot more work than I was expecting. Goodness."

Harry shook his head. "You know, I don't think anyone even suspected you'd patched those together."

"How'd you figure out it was me?" Albus asked.

Harry snickered. "When did you come up with the idea for these?"

"Oh, well, The Slytherin Manifesto was something I'd started to piece together years ago after getting sufficiently intoxicated... with..." Albus' shoulders slumped. "Nicholas."

Harry shook his head in embarrassment for the old man.

Albus chuckled at the situation. "I was just going to do that one, but then I thought that'd be too mean to do just the Slytherins, so I figured I'd have a go at all four houses. It just took a lot longer than I expected."

Harry nodded and laughed. "Well you definitely get points for presentation. They did look marvelous. The smiling cross-eyed lion with a helmet just about killed me. I'll come by your office later tonight and help you finish the Hufflepuff and Ravenclaw guides."

Albus grinned. "How about I'll take care of Ravenclaw's and you can do your Hufflepuff's? This way we can discover each other's when the rest of the staff does."

Harry readily agreed as his plan for a guide began forming. Professor Prongs had just finished with his last Transfiguration class of the day, and his mind was already thinking ahead to their official Marauder Prank Team meeting. He wasn't watching where he was going and nearly bowled over his wife.

“Whoa!” James claimed. “Sorry about that, honey. I didn’t even see you there. You ready for our meeting tonight?”

Lily winced a bit and sighed. “Err... right. The meeting. Listen, sweetie... umm.”

“Something the matter?” James asked.

Lily chewed on her bottom lip. “I’ve been thinking... some...” She paused unsure how to approach the subject.

“Careful there, ‘thinking’ can be very dangerous,” James said with a grin.

Lily seemed to huff. “Oh never mind. I’ll just... catch up with you later.”

“Wait!” James asked worriedly. “What’s going on? What did you want to talk about?”

Lily looked up at her husband hopefully. “I don’t really know how to say this...”

“You could start at the beginning,” James pompously said, doing his best Albus impersonation.

“Right,” Lily said, building up her confidence. “Okay. I guess it’s... well... you remember when we said ‘till death do us part?’”

James smile faltered, having never really considered the meaning of those particular words.

“Because, I mean,” Lily shrugged. “We died. And it parted us. You know?” She seemed to be rambling and was ignoring her husband’s shattered look. “I know I died trying to save my son, I mean our son. But there was a good, I don’t know, thirty seconds there at least where I was a widow. And while it’s true I wasn’t ever asked out in that time, I legitimately could have been, as our marriage had by law ended.”

“What are you saying?” James asked looking like a kicked puppy.

Lily raised her hands to stop him before uncertainly crossing her arms and tucking her body closer together. “I’m not saying you’ve ever been a bad husband or that I ever even considered cheating on you. It’s just... we’ve got a fresh start here, and I don’t think we should just automatically assume that going back to being married is for the best, that’s all.”

“What?” James’ lip was trembling. “Why?”

“It’s not like you and I don’t have a chance or anything,” Lily assured him. She smiled lightly. “I would like to continue seeing you still, just not as exclusively as marriage. I guess, I’m hoping to... you know, play the field a bit first.”

James didn’t know how to respond to that.

“When you were talking about which heir of Slytherin I had slept with,” Lily paused and made a show of looking away. “It made me realize I hadn’t ever slept with a Slytherin, you know?”

“Snivellus!”

“No, great Merlin, no.” Lily said aghast. “But...” She turned to the empty air next to her. “Go ahead. He’s not going to hurt us.”

And there, pulling off an invisibility cloak was Draco Malfoy.

Draco smiled weakly as he carefully folded his cloak. “No hard feelings? Right, Professor Prongs?”

James was just itching to deck the slimy bastard.

“Stop!” Lily ordered, seeing the anger in his eyes. “You don’t know him! He is not his father. You’ve only ever known Lucius! Draco is a good man.” Lily blushed a little. “And... and he’s my silver serpent.”

Inwardly Draco forced down his gag reflex at that line. Outwardly he smirked at Lily, who was leaning in close to him. Draco looked up at James with a confident smile. "Actually, you know, Professor Prongs. I'd love it for you to join us."

Lily's hungry eyes looked up at Draco. She huskily breathed out, "Really?"

Draco looked James up and down. He nodded with a lecherous grin. "Oh yeah. Definitely. Do you mind if I call you Harry?"

This was apparently James breaking point, as he could take it no longer and sprinted away from the freakish pair screaming bloody murder. He turned the corner and stopped suddenly to see another Lily with her legs wrapped around Draco. The blond was holding her up with his hands squeezing her arse. Lily looked over her shoulder with a sultry smile. "How 'bout it, sweetie?" She asked him.

James jaw just dropped and he spun around to run the other way only to find himself trapped in by another Lily and Draco. He yelped like a girl and whipped his head back and forth, trapped between two Dracos and two copies of his wife.

He drew his wand and was about to start cursing his way out, when the first Lily who had snuck up behind him morphed into the familiar face of his own son.

"Prongs, Prongs, Prongs." Harry sighed and shook his head. "Don't make this too easy on me, old man."

James turned around saw the other Lily morph into Tonks.

Harry turned to the Draco next to him, and patted him softly on the head. "Thank you Tibbles." A blink of Harry's eyes and that first Draco disappeared. James spotted a tattoo appear and start moving around on the other Draco's previously unblemished skin.

Tonks and the real Draco were grinning brightly and shaking their heads. She made a sad, pouting face at James. "Tsk, ts. And I thought you called yourself a Marauder."

“God dammit, Meg,” James swore as he clutched his chest and chuckled weakly. “That was really mean.”

Harry shrugged his shoulders and nodded in agreement. “Just wait till we start using things beyond our innate magic.”

Tonks quickly morphed in Sirius’ appearance. “We could be anyone, anywhere.”

James looked back at his son, only to see a familiar scarred auror friend.

“Constant Vigilance!” The Mad-Eye Moody clone roared.

Unprepared for the yelling in his ear, another feminine yip escaped his lips. James just stomped his feet angrily, shaking his head, and walked away mumbling about ‘lucky metamorphic freaks.’

Harry, Draco, and Tonks were laughing at his frustrated muttering. Harry called out as he left, “Thanks for the tip on the meeting tonight.” “Of course sweetie,” Lily smiled warmly. “I’d be more than happy to renew our vows. But what brought this on? It’s only been about three years.”

James kissed his wife. “No reason. I just love you.”

“I love you too, honey,” Lily embraced him. “And I don’t believe you for a second.”

“Fine,” James grumbled. “I just realized we weren’t exactly married still, and I didn’t want to freak out every time I see you making out with Malfoy, okay?”

“Eww,” she exclaimed. “What? And ewww!”

James reluctantly recounted his experience after his last class of the day to his wife’s immense amusement. James pouted. “Hmmp. Maybe I should try playing the field some.”

Lily shrugged. "Were you not even just a little bit tempted by Draco's offer?"

James face scrunched up in disgust. "Fine. Let's get married again. Or stay married. Or whatever."

Lily kissed her husband on the nose and led the way towards their meeting. "Silver serpent. Honestly. I don't know how you could have taken that seriously."

"Nicholas!" James cheered happily.

"Prongs!" Nicholas cheered back.

"You know an easy way to verify all the right people are in this meeting?"

Nicholas grinned widely. "Harry got you already, didn't he?"

James frowned and narrowed his eyes. "You can start by proving you are who you say you are."

Nicholas grinned, and thought back to how lucky all the Nicholas Flamel's through history have been. Since he never existed as a person in the first place, the name is actually just a label, and whoever is the current one can always be identified that way. Nicholas lifted his wand. "I swear on my magic I am Nicholas Flamel."

James' eyebrows rose. That seemed a bit melodramatic but certainly proved he was who he said he was.

Nicholas was smiling, "And I know a thing or two about Legilimency, so just have everyone else state their name and I can tell if they're lying."

"Prongs?" James asked pointing at himself.

Nicholas nodded. "Close enough."

As the rest of the people filed into the unused classroom, Nicholas verified they were all who they said they were. And they all took seats around an old stone round table.

"Alright now," Fred said. "What's going on?"

George added. "Moony wouldn't tell us, but he's been acting a bit giggly."

"Fred, George, Ginny," James addressed. "You three have been selected to my team in a prank war."

"Sweet!" Fred and George cheered.

"Against Harry and his team," James clarified.

"Crap!" Fred and George cheered in the exact same excited voice.

Ginny smiled but was groaning.

"Why's everyone so scared of him? Everything I've heard says that the five of us," he pointed to the twins, Moony, Padfoot, and himself, "have tons more pranking experience, knowledge, and skill."

Fred and George exchanged a look. "Yeah... probably," Fred said.

"But he's Harry," George explained.

"What do you mean?" Lily asked.

George looked towards Moony for a little help. "Err... how much have you guys heard about Harry's life so far?"

"Most of it," James replied. "I'm pretty sure. Covered his school years, and many of the battles."

"Okay, good," Fred nodded. "So you know, that despite having about a billion extra magical gifts or talents, Harry was still no match for the Dark Lord."

James looked towards Sirius. "Err... okay?"

Nicholas nodded. "Tom was more powerful, had years more experience, had truly perfected his craft, and could literally duel anyone into submission."

"Except Harry," Ginny stated.

"Right," Sirius slowly nodded.

Fred shook his head, as it appeared they still didn't get it. "It wasn't because Harry was a better dueler, though by now, I'm pretty sure he's probably the best in the world. It was because he's Harry."

George nodded solemnly. "You could strip all away his silly titles, his odd talents, his superfluous power, and he still would have won."

Fred and George shrugged together and in unison explained it. "He doesn't lose. Ever."

Ginny nodded. "He's an idiot sometimes. He'll falter. You can trick him occasionally, though since his little running away escapade that's become a lot harder," Ginny was scratching her head trying to think of the last time someone got a good one over on Harry. "But when it comes to simply winning or losing, he doesn't lose."

"We're still going to prank his pants off," Fred smiled.

George interrupted, "Hey, that's a good idea right there."

Fred agreed and nodded. "Just enjoy the battles and don't place too much emphasis on the overall outcome of the war."

James and Sirius looked to Nicholas for help.

Nicholas smiled weakly. "He's not invincible or unbeatable. He's just got more advantages on us than I expect we even realize." Nicholas was scratching his head. "It's like a pitting an 800 pound gorilla against a bunny rabbit and then telling them to fight fair."

And then, shocking everyone present not named Nicholas Flamel, Harry's head sprouted out from the middle of the table. "Oi! I'm not a gorilla! And you keep fattening me up, old man!" Everyone jumped back at the head appearing in the middle of the table. Especially Sirius, whose entire chair fell backwards.

Harry noticed a thin film separating him from the others in the room. He began pushing on it with his hand, and he was stretching it away from his face. "Nicky!" Harry scolded with a smile. "Using Dark Arts privacy wards too!"

Nicholas smiled and shrugged. "I see they haven't done a whole heck of a lot. Though at least now I know what you look like with pantyhose on your face."

"Just don't tell anyone in Shetland County, please." Harry mumbled with a slightly worried look. He was holding the odd magical film away from his face. "Yes well, I can't help it if I happened to have been informed there was a meeting and I happen to accidentally be using my bonded sweetie to listen in, now can I?"

"Bonded?" Lily asked.

Nicholas looked at the rest of the team. "We may want to have our meetings away from Hogwarts. It appears she likes him too much."

"That's right," Harry smiled smugly. "I... ohh... what! No..." And just like that Harry's head was sucked back into the stone and he disappeared.

Nicholas was looking up and listening. "Or not."

"Huh?" James asked.

Nicholas smiled brightly. "It appears Hogwarts is well aware of our prank war, and is greatly looking forward to seeing both of our teams humiliate each other." Nicholas nodded and looked at his teammate's faces. "I'm pretty sure she'll keep our secrets as long as they lead to mischief."

Sirius grinned. "Lovely. I think we can handle that."

Nicholas nodded. "But since we can, it may still be a better idea to just meet up at your guys' shop," Nicholas nodded towards the twins, "for future meetings."

Fred and George nodded. "Makes our commute easier. But then that makes our presence a pretty strong indicator of a prank on the way."

Ginny snickered. "I think your presence already commands that response."

Fred and George sheepishly agreed.

"So," James asked. "Anyone got any particular plans? Or strategies?"

Remus spoke up. "Harry's going to be pretty hard to directly prank. Indirect ones causing excessive embarrassment are probably our best bet."

"What do you mean?" James asked.

Fred explained. "He means most people get pranked by hitting them with a curse when they don't expect it, or slipping them a potion. Harry's not exactly the easiest to catch off his guard."

"Not to overstate my abilities," Nicholas smiled. "But I'm the most likely one to be able to get anything to stick on him, and usually even when I do manage to, he knows it's coming." Nicholas shrugged and was inwardly enjoying his choices of words.

Ginny clarified. "What Moony is suggesting is indirect pranks. Things like sending perhaps an engagement announcement between Harry and Tonks to the Daily Prophet, maybe one with Eloise Midgen to The Quibbler, or another to Witches Weekly. Pranks to embarrass, that he doesn't have shields for."

The reborn zombies nodded in understanding. Lily asked, "Any reason not to do those exact ones?"

“Well,” Ginny hesitated. “Harry sort of owns the Daily Prophet...”

“And a controlling interest in Witches Weekly too,” Nicholas added.

“Really?” Ginny asked.

“You remember their planned bi-monthly all Harry Potter, all the time issues a year or two ago?”

Ginny shook her head. “No.”

“That’s because he bought up all their loans.” Nicholas sagely pointed out. “And put strict limits on their Potter coverage.”

“The Quibbler, though, is Luna’s father’s,” Remus stated. “And they’re friends, so they can print just about anything.”

“I like that girl,” Lily said with a grin. “We should get something in there.”

Moony smiled and nodded. “I’m beginning to get an idea on an expose they might like to run.”

Sirius grinned brightly. “Oh Moony, I’ve missed that devious look on your face.”

“Yes well,” Remus was looking around the room for what he didn’t even know. “Why don’t you guys let me give this one a try solo? Or at least wait until we’re out of the belly of the beast to discuss it openly.”

Nicholas was inwardly cursing. “Wise choice, Remus. In the interim though, I think I’d like to go for a more direct attack on his support base a bit.”

“Snivelly?” James perked up.

Nicholas shook his head. “I know better than to try and defend him to you guys, but actually I was thinking Tonks and Hermione could make a couple of good targets. Nothing too bad.”

“Excellent!” Ginny cheered.

Nicholas looked over at Fred and George. “I think I may set up a few things in the apartment over their shop, so you all can track me down easily enough. I would say, I’d find you first, but the all-seeing eye can be fickle.”

James nodded. “Yeah, I think we’re going to be relying on you for anything major. You’re probably our best shot at directly pranking Harry.”

Nicholas nodded. “I by no means wish to take away from any of your efforts or attempts, I’m just... more familiar with some of his secrets than others, as I’m sure Remus can attest too. Particularly a couple of years ago.”

Remus frowned. “Are you two still bound by secrecy charms?”

Nicholas nodded. “Him as well. Especially on everything relating to Dementor Blood. Speaking of which, you should know we’ve made some preliminary calculations on your hmm... special circumstances. Our numbers weren’t even close to what they should be. I would be surprised if we act on anything before summer.”

Sirius frowned. “We’re stuck teaching all year?”

Nicholas’ eyes twinkled. “If you would prefer to die again sooner, I’m sure it could be arranged.”

“Oh,” Sirius recalled. “Oh yeah. Umm... hmm... enh. No thanks. I guess teaching is better than death. But not by much.”

“Albus!” Filius began screaming in the staff room. “Potter did it again!”

“He did?” Albus asked curiously.

Filius nodded his head frantically. “I found all of my students using new bookmarks this morning!”

“Oh?” Albus asked. “That sounds wonderful. Bookmarks are very useful tools for keeping track of what page you are on.”

“Dammit Albus!” Filius Flitwick yelled. “Aren’t you even going to look at it?”

Albus shook his head. “I’ve already seen it, my friend.”

“I haven’t,” Harry cheerfully said as he appeared behind the tiny Charms professor.

Filius gave Harry an evil eye. Harry just looked back at him impassively until he handed Harry a bookmark. Harry was chuckling at Albus choice of material for the guide and read what he’d written.

A Ravenclaw Study Guide

There’s nothing wrong with loving books, other than the paper cuts.

I. The only people who say that not all knowledge can be found in books are the people with really crappy books.

II. Others may be taller, others may be stronger, and others may be prettier. But if you’re smarter, then you will always be better than everyone else.

III. If those Slytherins think they’re so smart, then why weren’t they placed in Ravenclaw? I mean honestly.

IV. Don’t feel bad. There is no rational explanation for Hermione Granger’s placement in Gryffindor. The Sorting Hat was probably drinking.

V. The library is the ideal place to meet new friends, to research in your free time, to study ahead for classes, and to watch other people while wondering what it would be like to lose your virginity.

VI. If I had a Knut for every time someone assumed Ravenclaw is nothing but nerds and geeks, I would have 342,013 Galleons, 14 Sickles, and 8 Knuts, as of 8:42 PM GMT, September 4th, 2002.

VII. You are right. And they are wrong. Nothing they can say will change that.

Filius ignored the young Professor Potter's chuckling. "And what are you going to do to him?"

"To whom?" Albus asked.

"Potter!"

Albus frowned. "I do not believe we have any reason to think Harry was behind this."

Harry lifted the bookmark in the air. "I swear on my magic this is the first time I've ever seen this."

Filius was beginning to wonder how much Harry's oaths of magic were really worth.

"Headmaster!" Severus yelled barreling into the staff room. "You won't believe what the Hufflepuffs have been carrying around!"

Albus turned to Filius and smiled. "Now this one I haven't seen nor heard about yet."

"Albus!" Severus pleaded. "There is something sinister going around, and I'm not so sure Professor Potter is actually at the root of it."

"Why does everyone automatically assume it's me?" Harry whined. "There's an awful lot of other pranksters here."

Albus frowned. "Severus, Harry already swore on his magic that he wasn't behind these pranks."

"Well," Severus seemed especially skittish. "Whoever is... they're not right in the head. Not right at all."

Albus frowned and his eyes flickered towards Harry. "What is it that has you so worried, Severus?"

"Well, I saw a first year reading a note from his mother," Severus began.

Albus shook his head. "Some people have mothers who love them. You must let this jealousy go, Severus."

"What? No." Severus was confused at the interruption. "I mean... Shut up." Severus seemed lost in some painful memory. "Oh right. So I noticed that they were all reading the same letter from their supposed mother."

"You were reading the Hufflepuff first year's letters?" Filius frowned. "That's low Severus. Even for you."

Severus shook his head again. "That's not the point! They were disguised to appear as letters from their mothers. When you cast a dark arts finishing spell, they turn into this." Severus said brandishing what at first glance seemed like very thick parchment, but was clearly not quite the right color or thickness for parchment.

"Good heavens, what is that?" the Headmaster asked.

"From what I've been able to tell," Severus winced. "It is skin of some sort, maybe human. And the ink is definitely blood. Here... read it."

The Headmaster took the folded skin and gave an extremely worried look towards his Defense Professor.

Hufflepuff for Life

We Are the Dark Gods and WE RULE OVER ALL!

1). There is no good and evil, there is only power... and those too weak to seek it.

2). There is no good and evil! There is only power! And those too weak to seek it!

3). Live fast, die young, and leave a mutilated unidentifiable corpse behind. And then, when no one's paying attention, assume the previous life of that corpse. Repeat as necessary.

4). Wizard, Witch, Pureblood, Halfblood, Muggleborn, Squib, Muggle. None of it matters, as inside they are all the same: five liters of blood

and an infinite number of ways to spill it. Except for babies. They don't have quite as much blood.

5). Tattoos are for pussies and Death Eaters. Real men carve art into their flesh with knives, not needles, ink, or magic.

6). The greatest trick the Devil ever pulled wasn't convincing the world she didn't exist. It was convincing her researchers, her grunt workers, and her scapegoats that she cared. And that they mattered. She even convinced most of them that they were more important than her. So she gave them qualities, characteristics, jobs, and duties. She renamed them Ravenclaws, Gryffindors, and Slytherins. You tell a man, he is sly and cunning and he finds it hard to disagree. No matter that expressly advertising that you are sly and cunning is just about the least sly or cunning thing you can do. If he is not a Hufflepuff, he will know no better. He will believe himself sly and cunning. Or he will believe himself intelligent and clever. Or he will believe himself brave and courageous. It is your job to make him believe that! Ravenclaws plan your strategies, Gryffindors fight your battles, Slytherins take your blame. And only behind the curtain, have the Hufflepuffs now and forever reigned supreme.

7). Three can keep a secret if two are dead. And thus, out of necessity, was born the rivalry between Slytherin and Gryffindor.

8). Men will wrong you, or wrong the true ideals of a 'puffer. When a man does, see if he expresses remorse. If he does, tell him you accept his apology. Nurse his wounds, become his friend, and help him to become healthy. Then as he turns his back to you to leave, slit his throat. If the man doesn't express remorse, then kill his mother, kill his sister, kill his wife, kill his daughter, and rape his dog. Grant only the mercy of death to those who are remorseful. And give only pain to those who are not. No one fucks with a 'puff.

"Good heavens!" Albus exclaimed aghast. "Professor Potter!"

Harry looked at the Headmaster. "I didn't do this. You said that yourself."

"Yes, well, you must hurry and do something to protect the students of your house!"

“From what?” Harry asked incredulously. “The truth?”

Albus just goggled at the vehemence on Harry’s deadly serious face.

“Look bitch,” Harry said poking Albus harshly in the chest. “You fuck with one ‘puff, you fuck with them all.”

Albus was speechless. He opened and closed his mouth, until he spotted some help. “Apprentice Padfoot!” Albus begged. “Would you please try to talk some sense into your Master and help your students?”

Sirius shook his head sadly. “No one fucks with a ‘puff, Albus.” He leaned forward, dragging his finger across his jugular and angrily whispered, “No one.”

CHAPTER FOURTEEN

“Harry!” Albus scolded from behind his desk. “Don’t you think maybe you went just a little too far?”

Harry grinned, having terribly enjoyed Albus’ blustering up until he was dragged back to the Headmaster’s office. “It was a prank! Going too far is what makes it funny.”

Albus frowned. “My intention was to mock the houses’ stereotypes and give them all a skewed view of the generalizations surrounding them.” Albus shrugged and added a little quieter. “And maybe scare the younger years a bit.”

“Yes well,” Harry replied scathingly. “The Hufflepuffs have been the butt of every Hogwarts joke for too long. So I thought I’d boost their self-esteem a bit. Give them some confidence and reasons to be more assertive.” Harry continued louder, “While at the same time reinforcing their feelings of loyalty to each other.”

Albus may have agreed with Harry’s stated end goals, but thought he probably could have gone about it a bit better. That and he was pretty sure Harry just now made all that up. “And just how do you think Madame Sprout would feel about what you’ve done to her house?”

“She’d be ecstatic! She would have loved it!” Harry insisted.

Albus frowned and retorted. “She would be appalled and disgusted, Harry!”

“She would not!” Harry said with a sad shake of his head. “You only ever knew the Hufflepuff mask she fooled you and the rest of her grunt workers, researchers, and scapegoats with. That bitch is hardcore, Albus.”

Albus frowned at anyone calling dear, sweet Pomona such derogatory names. “She is not hardcore.”

“She wears panties made of razor blades!” Harry yelled with firm conviction.

Albus just opened his mouth and then closed it. Horrified, disgusted, not believing that for a second, but still unable to stop imagining such a thing. Nor having any idea at all how to respond.

Shocking Albus into silence was becoming a particularly easy habit for Harry. He chided his Headmaster. “You’re not a ‘puff. You wouldn’t understand.”

“You’re not either!” Albus reminded Harry.

Harry scowled harshly and spat out, “I admit there was that ruddy prophecy. And because of that I had to be a grunt worker, and occasional scapegoat, but it’s over! And you can bet your cold black grunt-working heart that I’m a ‘puff now!”

“Just call them Gryffindor and Slytherin, for Potter’s sake!” Albus pleaded.

“Potter’s sake? Really, Albus?” Harry sighed. “You know that’s not funny.”

“But I thought it frustrated, angered, and irritated you.” Albus explained with a shocked face. “Does it not?”

“Of course it does!”

“Well then it’s very funny.” Albus nodded with a smile.

Harry grumbled. “Now the fossil gets a sense of humor. But use fake skin and the blood of fallen enemies and,” Harry’s voice went up a couple octaves as he mocked, “You’ve gone too far! Waa! How dare you! Waa waa waa!”

Albus just sighed. “Harry,” he began slowly. “Are you going out of your way to drive me to an early grave?”

Harry rolled his eyes at the old man’s melodramatics.

“Because you know,” Albus smirked. “If you kill me, you’re going to have to become Headmaster.”

Harry snapped to attention. “What? No I wouldn’t. Why would you think that?”

“Please Harry,” Albus chided smugly. “You honestly think the Wizarding World would let anyone else do the job? Or Hogwarts herself? Minerva’s first priority is Simon now, and she’s told me she has no desire for the job.”

Harry frowned, having not considered that.

“To be fair though, I suppose there would be some discussion as to whether it should be you or the esteemed Nicholas Flamel in the job.”

“Fine, fine, I get it.” Harry grumbled. “Consider me chastised, your point made, blah blah blah.”

“So,” Albus settled back with a smile. “How goes the research on what’s happened to the Dursleys and their bodies’ current inhabitants?”

Harry sighed. “We’ve been trying to recreate what happened on a smaller scale, and the combination of elements seems to introduce nothing we hadn’t already known. It’s the shield of love and my typical luck that seems to be what matters most.” Harry shrugged. “And there’s not a lot of ways to recreate those bits.”

Albus nodded. “Have you considered that perhaps this series of events was pre-ordained?”

Harry looked at Albus harshly. “You’re not about to pull some old prophecies out your arse, are you?”

Albus raised his hands and shook his head. “Not at all. If there was anything I knew of or believed, you would be the first to know. I’ve learned that lesson. I’m just merely speculating that...” Albus paused

and considered his words. "That among impossibilities you regularly defy, this is a pretty extreme one. Like surviving a killing curse was."

"You think some higher power or being is driving this short bus?"

Albus shrugged. "Not necessarily. But the meaning and intent behind the so-called 'shield of love' seems to be a magic of a different sort."

"So-called? You don't think my mother's love was what saved me, do you?"

Albus smiled weakly. "It's hard not to notice the only two partially successful instances of the magic involved you. And you obviously don't distinguish between rules imposed for safety, and rules that are impossibilities when you start breaking them."

Harry didn't care for the direction this conversation was going. Harry looked at the snoring artifact on one of the shelves. "Hey Mr. Hat? Did Professor Prongs get you your sauce?"

The Sorting Hat, aware it was being addressed, looked around and spotted Harry. "Yes, Professor Potter. He most certainly has." The hat smiled brightly.

Harry nodded. "Alcoholism agrees with you."

Albus frowned and looked at the Hat. "Did you intentionally refuse to sort the students?"

The Hat curled its brim upward to hide its snickers. "Maybe."

Albus shook his head. "How? When? Why?"

The Hat looked at Harry, who just shrugged in return. The Hat explained. "Potter's freakish dad originally asked me to just sort the kids into Snivellerin this year instead. That was while Fawkes and the Giant Squid were playing catch and you left them alone here in your office. Couple weeks ago, we renegotiated so that he could do the sorting. As for why, well, after a millennium I figured I'd earned a vacation."

“You work one day a year!”

The Hat’s brim shrugged up on the sides. “It’s the sauce. I’m an addict. Besides, my song was bad. I was trying to rhyme juicy pillow with pussywillow.”

Albus flinched and mumbled about insolent hats.

“Excuse me Professor Potter?” The intrepid reporter asked.

“Luna!” Harry smiled brightly. “What brings you to Hogwarts today?”

Luna’s face remained impassive. “I’m here in a professional capacity. We’re running an article on you, and I thought I would ask if you would like to comment?”

Harry shook his head but smiled. “Thanks but no thanks. I’ll stick with my usual ‘No comment.’”

“As you wish,” Luna nodded. “In that case, I have reached the limits of my professional capacity, and thought you might like to see the new issue.” She handed him a hot-off-the-press copy of The Quibbler.

Harry briefly wondered what would have happened if he had wanted to comment and he slowly opened the paper to read.

The Quibbler

Harry Potter nears his Mastery in Alchemy

by Luna Lovegood

The Quibbler got the scoop on Harry Potter’s magical loins last year, and we are proud to now present you with a startling new revelation. Mr. Potter will be completing one of the most difficult and painful processes to becoming a Master of Alchemy. Before we were unsure how and why Mr. Potter’s ample seed was by all appearances Elixir of Life. Now we have come to understand this was a step in his apprenticeship in Alchemy to the most famous Alchemist of all time, Nicholas Flamel. Any day now, it will become official as Mr. Potter is currently nursing and will very soon be passing a large Philosopher’s Stone out his soon to be truly immortal urethra.

There has been much speculation on why it takes so long to make a Philosopher's Stone and exactly how to make one, but with the revelation that it must be passed like gigantic kidney stone, it is clear why it is such a long and hard process. Close personal friend of Mr. Potter's, Remus Lupin stated, "Harry has been very protective of the magical creation growing inside of him and was adamantly refusing to even consider having it shattered so as to be less painful to pass. I believe Fawkes (Headmaster Albus Dumbledore's phoenix companion) may have a better idea of what's actually going on than I do." When asked, Fawkes was eager to add, "Trill, trill, warble, trill. Warble warble warble trill!"

Mr. Potter characteristically declined to comment, but this reporter earnestly hopes that his thick and delicious penis is up to the arduous task.

Harry groaned and looked at an innocently smiling Luna. "Would I be correct in guessing it was Remus or Professor Prongs that brought this curious piece of journalism to you?"

Luna nodded. "A good reporter never reveals her sources. It was Professor Lupin."

"Great," Harry sarcastically added. "Now I'm going to have even more people with wandering eyes whenever I pee."

"I just report the news," Luna defended her actions. "It's a lonely life distancing my personal feelings from the subjects of my articles."

Harry nodded. "You know I'd never blame you for what you write."

"Thank you, Harry," Luna said and kissed him on the cheek. "Do you have a class to teach right now, or do you have a free period?"

"Good afternoon, Luna," Lily interrupted as she walked up to greet the serene blonde.

"Hello Professor Bessie," Luna smiled. "How are you enjoying teaching at Hogwarts?"

Lily smiled. "It's a lot of fun. Though my colleagues seem a bit childish."

"Old souls, young at heart seem to be the hallmark around here." Luna agreed. "That and all the crotch-munching dillwillies."

Lily nodded with wide eyes. "Those are a pain. So what brings you to Hogwarts today?"

Harry answered with a frustrated grin. "She was showing me the latest issue of The Quibbler. Although I have a feeling you have a pretty good idea about the front page article."

Lily's eyes betrayed her innocence. "I have no idea what you're talking about."

"Right," Harry said as he handed her the issue Luna had given him. "I'm sure Remus and Prongs would be equally surprised."

"No doubt," Lily smiled. "So Luna, care to join me for a late lunch?"

"Actually," Luna replied. "I was hoping Harry might have a free period right now."

"I do," Harry nodded.

"Then perhaps I could join you for dinner instead, Professor Bessie?" Luna asked.

Lily nodded an affirmative.

"Lovely," Luna smiled and turned to Harry. "Because I was really in the mood for some of The Sex before Harry's member becomes damaged. No doubt by dinner, I will have worked up quite an appetite."

Harry just got a goofy smile and bobbed his head up and down at his mom. "Later Bessie."

Lily just weakly waved at couple sprinting out of the Great Hall more than a little confused, but undeniably desiring some alone time with her husband.

"I love you Luna."

Luna sighed happily. "Good for you, Harry. I was slightly worried dealing with your parents and godfather might turn you back into the emotional midget you used to be before bedding me."

"Naw," Harry explained with a far off smile. "It's surprisingly easy to get along with them. Although they're a lot more like friends than any sort of parent."

Luna nodded. "Yes, well, the things that would make you differentiate them as a parent rather than a friend or family you cannot exactly have with them, can you?"

"What do you mean?" Harry asked.

Luna looked over at Harry. "Well, it's all about growing up, defining your ideals, looking to your parents for guidance, protection, love, and acceptance. For them to be the sort of parent you're talking about, you would have to be a complete nancy-boy pussy without any personal identity. Parents teach you how to tie your shoes, or scold you when you run down the street naked. Again. And their scolding should hurt more than any punishment the local authorities try to impose upon you." She explained while Harry seemed to picturing a young Luna growing up. "Unless you've gotten this far in your life completely undeveloped as an individual, then the fact of the matter is you don't need parents. And I know you well enough to know you're pretty set in your ways. While nice to have them around, I cannot imagine even they could change you."

Harry thought about it. "Yeah, I guess if I did turn into some hosepipe spineless sissy, I'd have even more freakish neuroses."

"And you have quite enough of those as it is." Luna assured him.

Harry pulled Luna closer to him. "So all the voices keep telling me."

Luna sighed happily and sat quietly for a moment. "So... should I be making more visits to Hogwarts because your Order of the Penis could be permanently disbanded?"

Harry chuckled and shook his head. "Naw, there's no Philosopher's Stone growing inside me. It's just a phoenix egg that got launched into my stone body."

Luna noticed something odd in what Harry said. She asked, "Don't eggs usually break when they smash into stone?"

Harry shook his head. "Not this time. My stomach rippled into liquid stone. Caught it softly and it's incubating in my belly."

Luna nodded. "That would explain it."

Harry smiled realizing anyone else would be questioning the idea of a stone body or even liquid stone. "Yes well, I'm a little concerned on how to get the egg out."

"You can turn your body into stone?"

Harry nodded.

"And you can turn your stomach into liquid stone?"

"Err..." Harry thought about it. "I don't know."

"Isn't that how it got into your belly?"

"Yeah," Harry ashamedly realized. "Hold on a second, let me ask Hogwarts."

Luna nodded and practiced making shadow animals with her toes.

"What?" Harry asked the castle with surprise. "Well why didn't you tell me that?"

With a flash starting from the top of his head, Harry's body shimmered with magic and shifted into stone. Luna, who was still

quite comfortably naked lying on top of him, couldn't contain her curiosity and gave him a far from unpleasant squeeze.

"Oooo," Harry giggled. "Hold on a second, Luna." Harry clenched his eyes shut in concentration and then opened them. He looked down and saw his stomach seemed more smooth and the stone appeared more fluid than the rest of his body.

Luna was apparently feeling mischievous as she went for dibs and called out, "I'll get it!" She quickly rammed a hand into Harry's liquid stone belly.

"Whoa!" Harry jerked a bit startled. "Careful there Luna. You're not digging for treasure."

Luna jerked her hand out and had discovered a small bone. "Nope, that's not it." She chucked it over her shoulder and went back to digging.

"Hey!" Harry yelped. "I may need that!"

"Oh shush," Luna scolded. "You've got plenty of others."

Harry just looked at the smile on the blonde and couldn't bring himself to stopping her.

After a fair amount more searching, she called out, "I think I found it." She paused and was tugging gently. "But it's stuck."

"Just... just..." Harry sighed. "Just don't take out anything else I might need in there."

She plunged her other arm into his belly and with both together began tugging harder. After a bit of a struggle, Harry felt something inside him shifting significantly. Luna smiled as she slowly pulled her two hands out of Harry's belly and held gently between them was the egg.

"Nice work Luna," Harry cheered as he took the egg from her. Harry began brushing off the wet liquid stone covering the egg, and was

shaking the excess into his belly. Harry closed his eyes and with another flash beginning at the top of his head and flowing down his body, it shimmered and turned back into his normal soft pink flesh.

Harry could feel the warmth from the egg as he ran his hands over the surface. He had a look of confusion on his face.

“Is it supposed to look like that?” Luna asked.

Harry traced his fingers over the cracks in the stone that seemed to have become the egg’s new thicker shell. “Err... I don’t think so.”

Luna tilted her head and asked Harry with a condescending smile, “Did you mutate it?”

Harry sighed, as he slowly hefted the weighty egg up and down. “Yeah, Luna. I think I did.”

“Cool,” she enthusiastically cheered.

Harry looked over at Luna. “I think this egg is going to hatch into something pretty special.”

Luna grinned. “By special, you mean retarded?”

Harry laughed and stuck his chin out proudly. “I’ll love it just the same.”

“Oh!” Luna exclaimed. “That reminds me! Rorschach had babies!”

“Rorschach the Snorkack?”

Luna nodded gleefully. “Yup. She had five and they all seem happy and healthy.”

“That’s great Luna,” Harry cheered. “Did you name them?”

Luna nodded with an ever so slight smirk. “There’s Illogical, Unlogical, Dislogical, Antilogical, and Hermione. They’re so cute and sweet.”

Harry laughed at Luna's unique choice of names. "I'll have to meet them sometime."

"You know you're welcome anytime," Luna assured. "But I'll warn you, Hermione is a bit antisocial. I hope she lightens up and makes friends with the others soon."

Harry snickered. "Let's hope so."

"Oh dear god!" Tonks wailed. "What the hell happened to me? I feel so stifled. I'm having trouble breathing. It's like being trapped in someone else's skin."

Sirius just grinned at his frantic cousin. "I don't think it looks that..."

Tonks just snapped a frigidly cold angry stare his way.

Sirius giggled. "Alright, it looks horrible on you. Truly awful."

Tonks shrieked. "Who did this? I'm going to kill them! Was it you? Huh, tough guy? Was it?" She began shoving Sirius, who still could only laugh at her.

"On Hermione, it doesn't look too bad, but on you Tonks," Sirius laughed. "It looks like a beaver got electrocuted and has burrowed into your skull."

"This isn't funny, Padfoot." Tonks insisted. "I'm just not me if I can't change my hair."

A red-faced furious Professor Granger stormed into the room. "Where the bloody hell is he?"

Tonks looked over and saw Hermione was sporting Tonks' usual pink curly locks. "That's my hair!"

Hermione looked over at Tonks and paled at the frazzled looking roadkill on her head. "Oh Merlin Tonks. That look is horrible for you."

"I know!"

“Well then change it!” Hermione insisted.

Tonks was concentrating again and saw Hermione’s hair shift into what she was picturing. “Ahhhh!” She shrieked seeing the lime green bob Hermione was now sporting.

Sirius gave up trying to conceal his snickers and was all out laughing at the two women. The anger emanating from Hermione’s furious head, coupled with the neon colors and lengths it kept shifting through made for an image even Tonks was snickering at.

“What are you laughing at?” Hermione snarled.

Tonks giggled and gave Hermione a tall blood red Mohawk. “Nothing.”

“Where’s Potter?” Hermione demanded. “He knows you don’t mess with my hair!”

Tonks looked at Sirius. “Who was it, Padfoot? Was it Nicholas?”

Sirius looked innocent. “I’ve no idea what you’re talking about.”

Tonks and Hermione shared a look. “Nicholas.”

Sirius began to pity the old man. “I never said he had anything to do with it.”

“Right,” Hermione snarled. “So do you know how long this is- for Merlin’s sake, Tonks. Stop it!”

Tonks was having fun shifting Hermione’s hair around and tried checking out how she had looked bald. It wasn’t pretty. She mumbled, “Sorry.”

“How long are we stuck like this?” Hermione asked Sirius.

Sirius raised his hands. “I told you, I don’t have any-”

“Padfoot!” Hermione yelled.

"A day!" He yelped in fear. "I wouldn't think it would last more than a day."

Hermione snarled. "You better hope not. Or Potter won't be the only one I defenestrate."

Sirius and Tonks didn't know what that meant, but it certainly didn't sound good.

Tonks weakly pointed out, "Don't forget your boyfriend."

Hermione shook her head. "I warned Harry, I'd hold him responsible if anything happened to my hair. I'm going to hurt him enough that even Nicholas feels it."

Tonks was trying to run her fingers through the hair on her head and she could barely move her hand in the thick bushy mess. "Good god, Hermy."

"Don't you mess with my hair either!" Hermione snarled.

Tonks managed to free her hand and just nodded dumbly, as she added some white streaks into the rainbow of colors that was on Hermione's head.

"Tonks!" Hermione snapped noticing the woman's eyes kept looking at her hair. "Shift my hair into what it's supposed to look like."

Tonks just complied, not in the mood to irritate the History of Magic professor any further.

Hermione saw her typically thick bushy hairdo and exhaled loudly as she turned around to leave. "I need to go kick something. Hard."

Sirius and Tonks shared a look. Sirius asked, "A bit touchy, you think?"

Tonks nodded. "Yeah, Hermy can be a vindictive bitch with a heart of gold. You might want to be on your guard. She's going to want some revenge and I doubt it'll be limited to just Nicholas."

"And Harry," Sirius added.

Tonks rolled her eyes. "Harry's got a lifetime of comeuppance he's way overdue for."

"Speaking of Harry coming," Sirius oh so subtly added. "How are things between you and him?"

"That wasn't crass at all," Tonks grinned at her reprobate cousin. "And we're fine. Been dating for a while and just having fun."

"No munchkin Potters in the oven? No wedding bells in the distance?" Sirius hopefully asked.

Tonks shook her head. "Sorry to disappoint, but it's just casual and nothing more."

"Alright," Sirius agreed. "But if you want some help eliminating the competition, just say the word."

Tonks seemed to be pondering it. "I'll keep that in mind." She raised an eyebrow and asked, "Actually, you want to do me a favor? See if you can transfigure this rat's nest into something that naturally grows on humans?"

Sirius waved his wand at it sending a couple different spells. He shook his head. "Nope. I figured it would be resistant to magic."

"Crap," Tonks sighed. "Oh well. I think I've got a few wigs, I can transfigure one of them as needed." Tonks grinned deviously.

"Why are you smiling?" Sirius asked, recognizing the signs of mischief when he saw them.

Tonks tried to look innocent. "Right now, I suspect Professor Granger may be unaware that she's trying some progressive hairstyles. Who knows? Maybe rat tails will become chic again."

Sirius winced. "That's just cruel."

"Who?" Tonks' eyes glistened. "Little old me?"

"Uric the Oddball was known for his many pet Augureys," Professor Granger lectured to her class. "While his eccentricities have been well documented, very little is ever made of his many discoveries."

All the students in the class were doing their best to contain their snickers.

"He is suspected to have been the first wizard to domesticate a- Miss Mathers!" Hermione angrily interrupted her own train of thought. "Do you have something to add to my lecture?"

The scolded little girl eeped. "No, Ma'am."

"As I was saying," Hermione snappishly insisted. "Uric was most likely the first to- Alright!" Hermione slammed her book down. "I will not stand for distractions in my class. Mr. Bender, stop your doodling now. Now would someone care to explain to me why no here seems to care about their grade?"

A nervous girl slowly raised her hand.

Hermione took a breath and called on her. "Miss Benoit?"

"Umm," the girl squeaked out. "Your... uhh... your ha- ha-... err. You've got a cowlick in your hair that keeps moving in time with your lips."

Hermione's eyes widened as she rasped out, "What?" right as her massive cowlick bounced and moved. It too seemed to be angrily hissing out the word. "Tonks!" She screamed so loud, it seemed as though her accidental magic had cast a Sonorus on her.

The young Katie Mathers jumped up out of her seat. "Gotta go, Professor Granger!" She was out the door and down the hall before Hermione had even reacted.

Hermione eyed the doorway the young girl sprinted out of. "Anyone know why Miss Mathers was in such a hurry?"

The girl who had been sitting next to her put her hand in the air, and replied. "According to Madame Pomphrey, she wasn't supposed to be out of the hospital wing yet. She woke up puking with the flu this morning."

Hermione just closed her eyes and sighed. She had a feeling she needed to defenestrate a few more people than just Harry.

"Severus," Harry scolded quietly from his spot at the Head table. "If you don't stop bouncing like a first year who needs to pee, I'm not going to help you with this."

Severus immediately halted his fidgeting and bowed his head. "Sorry. I'll be good."

Harry smiled at how quickly the man agreed. He shook his head at the Slytherin Head of House. "When did you become such an obedient little man?"

Severus snapped an angry glare at Harry before his emotions betrayed him and he was smiling again. "I used to dream of this day."

"You're hopeless," Harry said with a smile.

"Is he coming? Is he close?"

"Not yet," Harry assured him. "I'll tell you when."

Sirius poured himself some pumpkin juice oblivious to their discussion. He leaned over towards his godson. "So Harry," he began. "We were brainstorming some good ways to embarrass you and we realized we didn't know if you had been denied one of the necessary, important steps in a young man's life."

Harry turned to his godfather on the other side of him and merely raised an enquiring eyebrow.

“The question we had was...” Sirius grinned broadly. “Have you ever gotten The Talk?”

Harry smiled back at his godfather. “As much fun as I’m sure it would be for Prongs and Bessie to demonstrate while they lecture, I’m sorry to say, that I have in fact had The Talk.”

“Nuts,” Sirius said. “It wasn’t me or Moony. So who was it? Albus?”

Harry paled. “Oh thank Merlin, no. I don’t even want to think...” Harry shook his head viciously to lose that train of thought. He turned to his godfather and explained, “Actually, it was after I graduated and I was chatting up this cute brunette in a muggle bar in Italy. The conversation was mainly playful flirting, but I mentioned that I had never had a full-blown official Talk.”

Sirius nodded and was listening curiously.

“There was a gentleman at the bar, who overheard us, and basically insisted that he get the pleasure of giving me The Talk. I argued that it wasn’t necessary, but he said it was important.” Harry shrugged. “I saw the seriousness in his eyes, he seemed like a good enough guy, so I figured I’d oblige him. I bought us a couple more beers each and joined him in a back booth. He wouldn’t let the girl join us. Male bonding or something or other.”

Harry grinned in remembrance. “He introduced himself as Rocco Siffredi, and I introduced myself as Sirius Lupin.”

Sirius grinned at Harry’s chosen name.

“Now, I mean, I wasn’t a virgin by then and hadn’t been for a while. And I thought I knew what I was doing, you know? I knew the basics of Tab A goes into Slot B, or if you’re lucky sometimes Slot C, but...wow.” Harry’s eyes widened in amazement. “I mean... I had no idea. He spent three hours teaching more moves, tricks, attack methods, positions, and general survival skills than I could have ever

imagined.” Harry nodded with a smile. “There was this one thing, he demonstrated with his hands where you take the girls left leg, hook it around your-” Harry stopped suddenly. “Hang on, Padfoot.” Harry stood up. “I’ve got to take care of something real quick here.”

Harry tapped Severus on the shoulder as he got up. He whispered to him. “It’s time. Go stand in front of Albus facing away from me.”

Severus hurriedly followed Harry and went to stall in front of the Headmaster.

Professor Prongs was barely ten feet into the Great Hall, in the mood for some dinner when he saw his son stalking towards him. “Good evening, Professor Potter.”

Harry simply drew his wand and quickly called out, “Venerio!”

James didn’t have time to dodge or anything and took the spell flush across his chest. “Ahh!” He yelped feeling the curse rush through his body. He reacted immediately and pulled out his wand, casting a Stupefy right back with barely a thought.

Harry merely twisted his body and let the stunning spell fly past him.

Severus had been following the altercation with his ears, and was trusting Harry on this one. He merely turned his head slightly and saw the red light of the stunner coming straight for him. Inches before it would have clipped him on the cheek, a golden ring appeared and swallowed up the spell. Another unnoticed ring floating behind Professor Padfoot redirected the spell into Sirius’ unprotected back, stunning him so that he fell forward into his dinner.

James was confused, and didn’t know what was happening. He didn’t even notice when his son silently summoned the wand from his hand.

Severus smirked dangerously and turned to the man who had inadvertently nearly cursed him. With a snap of his wand and a bright flash of light, Professor Prongs was flipped upside down floating in the middle of the Great Hall. “Professor Prongs, trying to curse me in the back?”

James' robes were hanging upside down covering his bright red blush. His pale legs and underwear were on display for the entire student body. He really began to regret wearing this particular pair today.

Severus looked at the other Professor's underwear and read what was written across the back of his tighty whiteys. "Sauve moi?" He wiggled his wand and spun the man around and read the front of his underwear. "Achève moi? French underwear, Prongs?" he snarled out the name distastefully.

Nearly all of the students were laughing at the sight of their Assistant Transfiguration Professor's futile flailing and frustrated huffing.

"Leave him alone!" Harry tried to argue, though he was obviously holding back laughter. "What did he ever do to you?"

"Well," Severus answered more than happily. "It's more the fact that he exists... again. If you know what I mean..."

Harry saw the pure unadulterated joy on Severus' face and couldn't take it. He joined in with the rest of the laughing students.

James stopped his struggling and just sat there waiting patiently to be released. Harry got the feeling Severus may never let him down, and he wrestled control of the spell from the Slytherin and lowered his father to the ground.

James was smoothing out his robes and was still crimson with embarrassment. He was chuckling with the rest of them "All right. I probably... No, I did deserve that one."

Harry's eyes were twinkling happily as he handed his father his wand back. "I'm glad to see you can take a joke."

James flushed and dropped his head when students began calling out, "Achève moi!" He looked up at Severus' victorious face. He smiled and admitted, "That was a good one, Professor Snape. It's nice to see your talents can extend to pranking."

“What?” Severus yelled as the joy disappeared from his face. “No! That’s not fair!”

James looked at his son curiously. “Err... what?”

“You cannot just brush this off!” Severus insisted angrily, beginning to purple in anger. “You have been humiliated! You must be crushed and cry yourself to sleep at night! You should feel no hope and have no options other than to seek out bloody satisfaction by serving the Dark Lord!”

“Whoa...” James said with surprise all over his face. He hadn’t realized just how mean he had been. He tried to calm the enraged Potions Professor. “I... I had no idea. I... I don’t know what to say, Severus. I... I’m sorry. I just...”

Severus’ anger immediately left and he clenched his eyes shut in glee as he pointed at James. “Sucker!”

James could only gape dumbly while his son high-fived the man. He realized not only had he been embarrassed, tricked, and shared his underwear with the student body, but worst of all he had just called the greasy git Severus.

Author’s Note: Yes, if you’re wondering, I’m going with the pronunciation of Rorschach as (Roar-shack) rather than any of the other theorized pronunciations. It can vary, but Rorschach is more fun than Love Shack. And rhymes better too. Big thanks to reviewer N. Reynolds for the idea of passing a Philosopher’s Stone. I read that, having never even considered it, and decided I needed to work it in.

CHAPTER FIFTEEN

"You called him Severus?" Sirius snickered before all-out laughing at the pure indignation on his best friend's face.

"Shut up," James pouted.

Lily was smiling brightly at her husband's frustration. "Should I be worried? Has the love-hate you share finally boiled over into just grisly, visceral, hot man-love?"

Sirius pondered aloud. "He's got a head full of lubricant, for fitting into those-"

"Yes! Yes." James yelled interrupting. He mockingly laughed, "Ha ha ha, it's very funny, thank you very much. Now can we move on please?"

Sirius and Lily just smiled at each other. "Alright fine. So how do we get back at them for this one? What could we even do that would approach matching this total and complete utter humiliation?"

Lily considered that one. "Maybe Ginny should give that exclusive interview about how Harry can't stop crying when he kisses?" Lily stopped. "No... not even that comes close."

James rolled his eyes. "I'm sick of these indirect pranks. The new issue of Wizard's Workout is coming out today still, but we have to get something past Harry's defenses. Have any of you gotten anything on him?"

Sirius shook his head. "We tried potions in his food, but they didn't even do anything to any of them. Harry, Albus, and Hermione's food all had the potion in it, but none of them grew any appendages, changed shapes, colors, nothing. And I tested the food afterwards. The potion was in there!"

Lily shook her head. "Half a dozen spells have hit him, but had no effect. Most of the time they just get swallowed up by those damn rings."

James sighed. "Fred and George's sweets just turned into a fun game for the Hufflepuffs. They said they had just created them, but even before eating them, Harry was telling the kids what they would each do. The trick doors and portkeys have caught us more than times than not, as he's moved them around each time. Or he just pops right past them."

Lily shook her head thinking. "You ever get the feeling there's something big that we're missing?"

Sirius shrugged.

James thought about it and agreed. "Yeah, I do. Maybe we should ask Nicholas?"

Sirius nodded. "Definitely. He's about the only one who has even pulled off any respectable pranks on them."

"No need to seek me out," Nicholas said as he broke into their impromptu meeting. "My spider-sense was tingling. And I'm looking forward to reactions to the photo spread in wizarding news stands now."

"What are we missing?" Sirius mercifully begged.

Nicholas smiled. "Besides good looks, wit, charm, intelligence-"

"Oi!" Sirius grinned at the old man. "Just because you're ancient, don't mean I won't bite you."

"I should hope not," Nicholas said with a wink. "And what do you mean, you're missing?"

"Harry!" James replied. "How the hell does he always seem to know about our pranks and keeps avoiding them? Or turning them back on us?"

Nicholas raised an eyebrow at their pleading looks. "Umm... you know if I could answer that you probably wouldn't need to ask it."

"What?" Padfoot intelligently responded.

Nicholas shrugged. "He's good. He can see magic when he focuses his senses. He keeps detection fields up around himself at all times, primarily because of the number of attacks on his life. He can pick up stray thoughts with Legilimency, and you'd never know it, though sadly he is too moral to actively seek them out or use them against you." Nicholas shook his head with a smile. "Silly ethics."

"Even still," Sirius frowned.

"Padfoot," Nicholas defended. "I'm not sure you really understand just how many people have tried to kill Harry, how many poisons he's had to overcome, or assassins he's been forced to battle. The fact that he's still around despite being the premiere target for every Dark Wizard looking to make a name is a testament to his vigilance and skill. If a prank did get past his defenses, then that would most likely be an avenue an assassin could use. And sadly you're all re-existing at a time, when he's just about the only one with Dementor Blood, which, in a capable wizard's hand, is as much a difference as having a wand would be to an unarmed man."

"Can't you use Dementor Blood?" James asked.

Nicholas nodded. "I have access to it, and know a few tricks with rings, but Harry's wandless and mind magic incorporates the rings in a way I would be hard-pressed to overcome. And besides the rings arrrrrrggghunnn."

Lily nodded. "We know. You can't talk about it."

Nicholas blushed and nodded despite inwardly cackling with glee. He paused and was tapping his chin. "One other advantage is that Harry hasn't left Hogwarts much, and here he has something of a homecourt advantage on us, given the fact that Hogwarts likes him

best. Perhaps we could come up with something for the Quidditch match this weekend?"

Lily groaned remembering her old promise and the especially skimpy outfit that had arrived. "Oh right. That."

"You know you will look beautiful honey," James grinned proudly.

"I'll look like a nearly naked whore." Lily whined.

Sirius nodded. "Right. Beautiful."

Nicholas rolled his eyes to hide the confusion he felt at imagining nearly naked whore mum. "Just remember with tickets, a location away from Hogwarts, and assigned seating, this gives us one of our best chances to trap him. I'll bring Fred and George by later tonight and we can figure something out."

"Sounds good," Sirius nodded. "But I'm hungry for lunch. I asked the House elves and today it's Bessie stroking off."

Lily smacked him upside the head, but Sirius knew it was coming. He just took his deserved beating.

Nicholas started to choke. "Right now I'm picturing house elves and a mental image ensuring I'll be having the chicken today."

"Don't knock it till you've tried it," James said as he led the way to the Dining Hall. Lily half-heartedly smacked her husband too, but her blush was evident.

The four of them took seats at the head table, where Albus, Harry, Severus, Hermione, and Tonks were already seated and eating.

Severus smiled down at Lily. "This Beef Stroganoff is delicious. Anyone you know?"

Lily frowned harshly and decided Snivelly was due for a hurting.

Harry sent Severus a shock of pleasure, who spasmed like a fool. "Behave, Severus."

Lily smiled victoriously and helped herself to a large salad.

Draco came racing into the hall. "Potter!" he shouted waving a magazine in the air. "Have you seen this?"

"Wizards' Workout?" Harry asked with a genuinely curious face. "I don't think I want to know."

"Workout?" Severus asked confused. "But you never exercise."

Albus coughed lightly. "I'm sorry to shatter your illusions Severus, but that is not the sort of magazine people buy for the fitness tips."

Draco huffed indignantly. "I get it for the articles."

Apparently none of his colleagues were convinced.

Draco shook his head. "Anyways, this issue has the Broomstick of the Year, and you won't believe who won."

James and Sirius gave up trying to conceal their enjoyment and were simply smiling deviously.

Harry raised an eyebrow and took the magazine. As he did, the centerfold fell out and showed the poster-sized moving photograph. Harry happily and loudly announced, "Well, I'll be a monkey's uncle. Congratulations, Professor Prongs. I didn't even know you had entered."

James smile disappeared and he gasped. "What?" He ran over and grabbed the magazine. Sure enough, it announced in loud neon letters, Nimbus Nine and a Half proudly presents Broomstick of the Year to Hogwarts very own, Professor Prongs. The picture showed him basically coated in oil as he was striking poses accentuating his many muscles. "What the hell happened! Where's the green eyes and the scar?"

Harry looked at his father innocently. "Oh? So you admit to posing for these pictures?"

"Of course I did!" James insisted. "Err... I mean. No, I didn't. You must have." He stuttered and stumbled over his words. "Aww forget it."

"You didn't, you say?" Harry asked, eyes all a-twinkle. "So does that mean you didn't give them the interview they published with this either?"

"Interview?" James asked with more than a touch of fear. He folded back up the lecherously grinning centerfold, who was holding a comically oversized wrench, and flipped to the personal facts page. He read out loud, "Wizards' Workout: You're a Hogwarts' professor. Our readers are wondering, what do you like best about children? Professor Prongs: Hearing the hipbones crack." James dropped the magazine, paled, and gulped.

A number of people were shocked into silence, which only made the Headmaster's loud and lingering snort all the more obvious. He quickly folded his beard up to cover his mouth and muffle his uncontrollable laughing.

"Albus!" Minerva scolded and smacked the Headmaster. "Don't you dare laugh at that! It's not funny. That is horrible!"

Albus did his best to contain his amusement. "Of course, Minerva. You are absolutely right. Not funny at all."

Apparently, Filius disagreed as he could no longer contain his snort of laughter either. The little guy fell right out of his chair, he was shaking so much.

"Filius!" Minerva yelled angrily.

"Mi-... Min-... Minerva?" The diminutive Charms Professor finally got out.

The angry looking transfiguration Professor could tell, she wasn't the only horrified one, but they were outnumbered by the people laughing, despite knowing they shouldn't be.

Harry looked calm and innocent. "I'm with you, Minnie. It's not funny in the slightest."

"You shut up, you little ingrate!" she snapped. "There's a special place in hell for people like you!"

Harry looked aghast and offended while Albus chuckled out. "And that place isn't funny at all either!"

"Shh! Here he comes! Everyone act natural!" Harry told his class. He spoke up in a louder voice. "Now if my apprentice were here I would be glad to... oh look who was kind enough to grace us with his presence. Professor Padfoot, would you care to tell us why you're late?"

Sirius was running behind and scrambled into the 4th year Hufflepuff and Ravenclaw DADA class. "Sorry about that. Professor Prongs had some concerns about his vagina that he didn't want to ask his wife."

Harry raised an eyebrow. "He still has that? And he thought that you would be the resident vagina expert?"

Sirius shrugged. "Well, for some reason he trusts me not to blab to everyone." Sirius shook his head with an impish smile. "Why he does, I'll never understand. And yes, Bessie thinks he could learn a thing or two and is forcing him to keep it for a few days. I have a feeling it won't last more than a few hours after the quidditch match Saturday, if that long."

A boy raised his hand eagerly. "Quidditch match?"

Sirius grinned proudly. "Oh yes. Several of the staff members are taking a bit of a day off to watch Puddlemere United completely decimate the Chudley Cannons. It's been years since I've been to a pro match."

“Hey!” a brown haired boy yelled. “The Cannons might win! They got a shot this year.”

“Five points from Ravenclaw for stupidity,” Sirius snapped immediately, though felt a bit guilty when the kid looked like he was going to cry. “Anyways, I do apologize for delaying class. What are we working on today?”

“I was hoping you would get here,” Harry grinned and winked at the class. “We’re going to learn about the Severing Charm. The incantation is Diffindo,” Harry said offhandedly while limply pointing his wand at an unprepared Sirius.

“Yeow!” Sirius yelped and jumped out of the way of Harry’s spell.

“Oops,” Harry grinned innocently. “My bad there, Professor Padfoot.”

Sirius frowned challengingly. “I’m sure.”

“Anyways,” Harry turned back to the class and walked up towards them, leaving his Assistant back by the chalkboard. “You can increase the power of the spell, if you focus and pour more of your magic into it. The wand movement is a slight downward slash, and then you whip the wand back up. It’s kind of like a saw with how you move it down and back.”

“Now class, watch carefully,” Harry instructed. “Professor Padfoot a demonstration, if you don’t mind?”

Sirius grinned and snapped his wand viciously at Harry. He bellowed out, “Diffindo!”

Harry’s eyes widened and he fell to the floor ducking. “Damn Padfoot! Not so much power!”

The spell seemed to almost grow in intensity and flew straight over Harry’s head down the middle row of students at their desks before smashing into the back wall and cutting a large gash into the stone in back.

“Merlin’s sake, Professor!” Harry berated as he got up off the floor. “This is a classroom, not the battlefield.”

Sirius just stood there shocked that Harry ducked rather than shield the curse. He could have sworn the spell cleaved straight through some of those students. He noticed right away that the middle row of kids was not moving. Their eyes weren’t even looking around. One of the girls reached over to her friend in the row. She put her hand on the other girl’s shoulder and shook her. “Marsha? Are you okay?”

Pandemonium ensued when Marsha’s head rolled off and fell to the floor with a thud. One by one all of the students’ heads in the middle row slid off their bodies and rolled around the floor.

Sirius looked as white as a sheet.

Harry’s eyes were wide and he could barely breathe. He turned to Sirius. “You are in so much trouble.”

And apparently that was Professor Padfoot’s breaking point, as his eyes rolled up into his head, and he keeled over in a dead faint.

Harry brightly smiled and turned to the class. “Five points for everyone! And five more, Mr. Patton for supporting the Cannons! Excellent work people! He’s out cold.”

All of the class cheered and all of the students pulled off their heads and were playing with them. Professor Potter had showed them all the rings and a way to put two next to each other, disillusion them, and give the appearance of a detachable head.

“Well,” Harry smiled at all the headless gleefully screaming students. “Now that we’ve got him unconscious... any ideas?”

Herman Crabbe thrust his arm into the air and was waving frantically. “Mr. Crabbe?”

“Professor, sir.” He addressed. “I’ve always wanted to find out if putting someone’s hand in hot water really works.”

Harry nodded and conjured a bucket. He filled it with hot water and set Sirius' left hand into it. Within a minute they had the results of their experiment.

"Cool!" Herman Crabbe yelled out excitedly. He was laughing with everyone else when his eyes lit up with a great idea. He waved his hand frantically again. "Professor Potter! Professor Potter! Will cold water make him poop?"

Pretty much everyone else in the class looked at Herman and wondered if he or his older brother got the brains in the family.

Harry snickered. "I hate to break it to you, Mr. Crabbe, but I'm afraid that is not the case."

"Aww," he frowned. "We can't even try?"

Harry pitied him. "Well, alright. We can surely give it a shot." Harry removed Sirius' hand from the hot water bucket and subtly used an elemental skill to cool the water to just barely above freezing. He then put Professor Padfoot's other hand into the cold water and sat there quietly. After a couple minutes, where the rest of the class seemed to be making fun of Herman Crabbe, Harry cast a wandless silent Dark Arts spell that did just the trick.

Professor Padfoot's unconscious body emitted some forceful wet flatulence and Harry shot up out of his seat. "Great Googahmoogah! It worked!"

Herman Crabbe just pumped his fist into the air. "Awesome! I told you!"

The rest of the class just stared on in shock, unable to believe cold water worked. And a bit disturbed at the smell permeating through the class that was distinctly worse than asparagus.

"Excellent creative thinking, Mr. Crabbe." Harry complimented. "Ten points to Hufflepuff. Now is there anyone else who would like to take pictures of Professor Padfoot?"

Once the class was all settled, Harry collected back all the invisible rings from the students, he told them all to pair up and practice the severing charm against the back wall, where the massive stone gash was. Harry cast spells cleaning up the mess in Padfoot's robes and took his apprentice out the front door.

He cast an Ennervate on him. "Padfoot?" Harry asked with a touch of concern in his voice. "Padfoot, are you okay?"

Sirius began shaking his head, trying to remember. "What happened?" he groggily asked recalling some horrifyingly realistic daydream.

Harry shrugged his shoulders. "No idea. When you didn't show up, I closed the classroom door figuring you had some prank backfire on you. From what I can tell you just ran headfirst into the door and knocked yourself out."

"Really?" Sirius asked looking around from his place on the floor.

Harry shrugged. "I just came out here with I heard a loud thump, and saw you out cold on the ground. Now, if you're up to it, we still have over half of class time left."

"Alright," Sirius agreed as he got up, feeling the faint tingle of dark magic in his bowels. "What are we working on?"

Harry grinned innocently as Sirius walked in and saw a very familiar gash in the back of the classroom. Harry explained, "We're working on the Severing Charm. I assume you are familiar with it?"

Sirius looked around the classroom and didn't particularly care for the grin on Harry's face. "Yeah, yeah, I know it. And stop smiling." He sniffed the air in the classroom. "Goodness. Smells like someone messed themselves in here." Sirius really didn't like the laughter that observation incited in all of the students.

Nicholas looked around the room at Fred, George, Ginny, Bessie, Padfoot, Prongs, and Moony. "Alright, Fred, George, and Ginny went and charmed all of the seats in our luxury box identically. Now, luckily at this stadium, all the seats are custom fitted with comfort, warmth,

and cushioning charms, so hopefully Harry won't notice anything beyond the normal magic on the chairs. Bessie and I have brewed a potion that while unpleasant in taste, is the antidote and counter to all of the special charms we'll have on our chairs. So, all systems go, and bottoms up!" Nicholas finished and knocked back a shot of the sludge they had brewed.

"Eeeurgh!" Ginny moaned. "If happy has a taste, I think that is the opposite."

"Blech!" James complained. "It tastes like Dementor!"

"When did you taste Dementor?" Fred asked with a touch of disbelief.

James dropped his head in shame. "A couple months back."

Sirius gulped his down slowly and found himself belching out a particularly strong aftertaste. "Oh lord. It tastes like the ass end of a menstruating skunk!"

George's eyebrows rose and he looked at Padfoot. "And when did you-"

"Fifth year," James, Remus, and Lily all answered in unison.

Sirius blushed and mumbled, "Stupid mindset... animagi training... lost control... oh never mind."

Moony was just rubbing his tongue on the roof of his mouth trying to get the taste out. "God this is worse than Wolfsbane."

Nicholas shrugged. "You should have tried it before we added the mint leaves to make it taste better." He so enjoyed those disbelieving looks. "Besides, if this is what it takes to get Harry properly, it is a small price to pay."

Everyone grumbled their agreement, a bit frustrated at how poorly they were doing in the prank war.

They went and met up with Harry, Tonks, Hermione, and Albus in the Entrance Hall. While James' team was hoping to get all of Harry's team with this prank, they weren't exactly going to invite Severus and Draco to the Quidditch match. Albus only invited himself when he heard what Lily was going to be wearing.

Harry took one look at the group headed their way. "Why do you all look so suspicious?"

Fred and George shrugged and answered together. "Because we're going to be ogling your half nekkid mum?"

Harry rolled his eyes. "You really don't have to keep reminding me of that."

"No," Fred said.

George finished, "We really do."

"Well, mum," Harry greeted her with a smile. "You can take comfort in the fact that you won't be alone."

"Really?" Tonks grinned brightly. "Are you going to be wearing a Puddlemere United Superfan Sisters of Yesteryear original outfit as well?"

Harry looked at Tonks a bit worriedly. "Err... that'd be a negative. No, Luna's meeting us there and thought that Bessie might appreciate having another half-naked girl there. She didn't want to portkey, as she was bringing one of her pets."

James hugged his wife, who was still adequately covered with a robe. "Honey, I just want you to know, that if you and Luna want to make out while we're there, you have my blessing."

Harry's eyes widened and really didn't know how he felt about that.

Albus chuckled at the slightly constipated look on Harry's face. He pulled out their portkey and they all grabbed onto it. One activation word later, the large group disappeared from Hogwarts.

"Wow," Harry exclaimed checking out their seats. "Our own luxury box. Very nice."

Ginny explained. "Yup. Ron pulled some strings for us, and he wants to talk to you after the match. He would talk before the match but..."

Harry nodded. "But he's a nervous blubbering mess before every match. I think if Jones got hurt and Ron knew he would be starting he'd be throwing up nonstop."

Gred and Forge agreed. "True. Partially because we'd trick him into eating a bowl of Puking Pastilles cereal."

"And partially because he's more nervous than Neville under the threat of losing his virginity."

Remus looked at the twins. "Do I even want to know how you...?"

"Gin-gin?" They smiled brightly at their rapidly blushing sister.

"Ginny Weasley!" James mock scolded.

Ginny shook her head sternly. "It's not what you're thinking, so get your mind out of the gutter."

Lily grinned. "So if it's not what we're thinking, what is it?"

Ginny shook her head. "I merely discovered him unconscious in the road with his pants off. I enervated him. First thing he did was to kiss me and loudly exclaim his love of life. When these two knuckleheads saw me chasing after Neville trying to give him his pants back they jumped to some inaccurate conclusions."

"Oh?" Fred grinned. "So now he kissed you too?"

"Hmm, yes," George nodded. "I believe she vehemently denied any kisses last time she brought up the subject."

"I didn't bring up-" Ginny feebly argued.

“Convenient,” Fred continued. “It’s like the fish that gets bigger with each successive telling of the story.”

“True,” George admits. “Neville claims it was three of the best minutes of his life.”

“Though he wasn’t a big fan of the fifteen minutes before consisting of vomit and tears.”

Sirius chimed in. “I don’t know. Sometimes the vomit and tears are just what the cocktor ordered.”

“Doctor, Padfoot,” Lily sighed. “Doctor.”

Sirius and the twins all snickered at Lily’s frustrated sighs. “She can’t help correcting me every time. It’s so easy, it’s like stealing virginity from a baby.”

“Candy, Padfoot. Can-...Oh just shut up and die already.” Lily grumbled as she left the group to sit down in the front row of their luxury box.

“Oh Bessie,” Sirius called out as he slung his arms over Fred and George. “Here’s one matching pair of boobs on display. Don’t you think it’s about that time?”

James nodded happily. “Enough stalling sweetie. A bet is a bet is a bet.”

Lily rolled her eyes and took off her robes. Immediately, Harry had to look away while Albus led James, Sirius, the Weasley twins and Tonks with loud cat-calls and wolf-whistles. “Yowza!” Albus happily hooted and hollered. Remus was shyly paying attention to Lily, while Nicholas obediently stared exclusively at his girlfriend Hermione.

Lily was striking a series of provocative poses and taking pride in the attention she was receiving. When she faced away from everyone and bent over to pick up her discarded robe, Harry just groaned. “Oh this is so wrong.”

"What's the matter, Harry?" Lily mischievously grinned. "Don't think your mum has kept up her girlish figure?"

Harry shook his head. "I'm not even going to dignify that with a response. We're here for Quidditch. Not to give me an Oedipal complex."

"Damn Harry," Lily rasped out with a lusty grin. "That's such a... big... word."

Harry morphed his scar away and his eyes from green to hazel. "Sweetie?"

Lily's hooded eyes widened and she stopped licking her lips. "Alright stop. You're right. That's just creepy."

Harry morphed his eyes and scar back. "Thank you."

"No thank you," Albus said to Lily like the dirty old man he was.

"Bessie!" A smiling Luna appeared. "What are the odds we'd both be wearing the same outfit?"

"Luna!" Bessie grinned back. "Some might call it a fashion faux pas, but I think it may look even better on you."

"No shit," Harry replied unable to tear his eyes away.

"Eloquent as always, Harry," Nicholas grinned and was observing what caught Harry's eye.

Luna grinned at Harry's slight drooling.

"Oh good gravy," Sirius said looking at the blonde. "Quidditch is awesome."

Hermione frowned slightly and pointed out. "Luna, don't you think that might be a few sizes too small for you?"

Luna shrugged. "Maybe. But it's really stretchy." She nodded, arching her back and thrusting out her chest. "And I'm very bendy."

Nicholas grinned. "I find myself inclined to agree." Albus merely closed his eyes with a look of immense bliss on his face permanently etching these images into his mind.

James was enjoying Luna's outfit almost as much as his wife's when he pointed to what she had brought with her. "What the hell is that?"

Luna looked at where he was pointing. She explained slowly to make sure he understood, "It is called a leash."

"Not that," James snapped. "The fuzzy thing attached to it!"

Luna grinned happily as she picked up her little precious. "This is one of my Snorkacks."

"You've got more than one?" Hermione asked shocked.

Luna sat down next to Bessie and pulled the little guy onto her lap. "Rorschach had babies! This is the runt of her litter. Her name is Hermione." Luna picked up the odd fuzzy creature and was giving it kisses. "Aren't you my little Hermy-on-my-knee?"

Hermione's jaw just dropped, unable to believe the catty blonde's audacity. "You named her after me?"

Luna shook her head. "No."

Hermione was tempted to smack Luna, but knew the futility of continuing this conversation.

"Luna," Lily asked curiously. "I've never heard of a Snorkack before. Are they magical?"

Luna handed over her little furball to Harry's mum seated next to her. "They're supposed to be, but I think Hermy here might be a squib."

Lily felt the furry little creature fidgeting in her lap and scratching her. "Hermione's a bit of a bitch, isn't she?"

Luna nodded. "She's got a lot of attitude. She's been having trouble making friends because she's so bossy with the others. I'm hoping it's just a stage she grows out of. I'm afraid the others may surround and eat her."

Harry was doing his best not to laugh while Hermione, the female witch sitting next to him, was beginning to get redder and redder.

Lily carefully handed the Snorkack back to Luna. "They're cannibals?"

Luna shook her head. "I don't think so. But so far it seems that hating Hermione may come naturally to the others."

"What are the others' names?" Lily asked, completely ignoring the men who were simply staring with their mouths open at the two nearly naked ladies.

Luna was petting her sweet little precious. "Well, mommy is Rorschach. She was my first Snorkack. I never even saw or knew of Daddy, but I'm pretty sure they can hide and turn invisible so he may just be shy or he may be gone already." She was rubbing under Hermy's chin. "Mommy had five babies. You've met Hermione here, and then there is Dislogical, Illogical, Unlogical, and... and... who am I forgetting?"

"Antillogical," Harry offered helpfully.

"Thank you Harry," Luna serenely nodded. "Antillogical."

Hermione just smacked Harry in the head because she needed to hit someone and Nicholas was acting reasonably well behaved.

Tonks snickered. "Cute names."

Albus' eyes were twinkling merrily. "I am finding this conversation, as well as the colors in Miss Granger's face, highly fascinating, but I should point out that our Quidditch match has begun."

“Oh right,” Harry said as he sat down and everyone else settled into the two rows in their luxury box. Harry whistled loudly. “Go Cannons!”

James frowned angrily and yelled louder, “Go Puddlemere!”

“You know Chudley is going to win today, right?” Harry asked with a smile.

James shook his head with a cocky grin. “Not a chance in hell!”

“Care to put a wager on that?”

James couldn’t believe Harry actually thought the Cannons were going to win. “Sure. Name it. Anything.”

Harry grinned a little too smugly. “Anything?”

James thought that one over seeing Harry’s confidence and decided. “On second thought, let’s just stick with a gentlemen’s bet and enjoy the match.”

“Whatever,” Harry shrugged and muttered loud enough so everyone could hear, “Pussy.”

James unfortunately couldn’t exactly argue with that given his current personal equipment and turned back to the match. “Go Puddlemere!”

Nicholas shared a curious look with Fred and George. They had wide eyes wondering what the heck was going on. He turned to his girlfriend. “Hermione, sweetie, are you comfortable? I can get you a pillow, if these seats are too rigid for your tender, delicious bum.”

James snorted a bit at how unsubtle the other pervy old man was.

Hermione smiled at Nicholas. “No silly, I’m fine. The seats have cushioning charms anyways.”

“They do?” Luna asked. She tested them out by bouncing up and down in her seat. Pretty much every male there was significantly

distracted, including a couple of Puddlemere's chasers. "Wow. That's a like a mountain of down feathers right on my practically uncovered posterior."

James shook his head, seeing the Cannons steal the quaffle. "Dammit Luna! Stop distracting the players by jangling your jingles!"

"Do you mind if I jingle my jangles though?"

James nodded. "Yeah, that's fine." James, Sirius, and Remus all shared a curious look wondering why their prank didn't seem to have had any visible effect yet.

Sirius leaned over to whisper and asked Fred and George, "Are you sure you charmed the seats right?" The twins nodded fervently. "Well trigger the major effects already then." Fred and George double-checked and saw none of Harry's team paying attention. They both pulled out tiny magical whipper snappers and quickly threw them to the floor. Less than a foot from the ground, they just hovered there unmoving.

They looked up and saw Harry staring at them with his hand pointed at the magical triggers holding them up. "Gred? Forge? Why do I get the feeling these things hitting the ground would be bad?"

The Weasley twins gulped and everyone on James' team tried to look innocent. James and Sirius beginning to whistle, was a little more than suspicious.

"Prongs?" Harry asked. "Padfoot? Moony? Anyone care to save yourselves some embarrassment?"

Fred shrugged. "Just whipper snappers. Nothing to see here."

"Right," Harry said as he appeared oblivious to Nicholas sneaking up behind him.

George quickly pointed and said, "Harry, look! Your mum's almost naked and her tits are awesome!"

Nicholas took advantage of the distraction and quickly licked his finger and gave Harry a juicy wet willy. "Ahh!" Harry screamed as he rubbed his slimy ear, and lost his concentration on the whipper snappers.

The small triggers smashed into the ground with a flash of light and massive plumes of purple smoke. A few gusts of wind dispersed the smoke, and when the view was clear James' entire team was saddened to discover Lily and Luna were no longer alone in their predicament.

Albus' jaw dropped to see Remus, Sirius, James, Ginny, Fred, George, and Nicholas all had extremely well developed female bodies with only the slight cover of Puddlemere United Superfan Sisters of Yesteryear original outfits on them. Albus began wolf-whistling and cat-calling again at the familiar faces and out of place heads on seriously smoking hot robust womans' bodies.

Harry just grinned smugly at them. "Didn't I warn you guys that those things hitting the ground would be bad? And no one wanted to save themselves embarrassment?"

Shortly before the explosion, a time-out had been called in the match, so they had caused no distraction to the players. But it just so happened to be the time when they went about the stadium showing the celebrities in the stands. Right on queue, the announcer could be heard, "And joining us today is Harry Potter!"

They all looked up and saw their entire luxury box on the massive jumbotron. The announcer cheered, "And great googahmoogah! He's brought a whole troupe of Puddlemere United Superfan Sisters of Yesteryear with him! Praise be to Harry!"

The entire stadium roared its approval as sporadic shouts of "Praise be to Potter!" could be heard. Nicholas dropped his head in apparent embarrassment while the Weasley twins jumped up and waved to all the adoring fans.

The jumbotron just stayed focused on them for several moments while Harry and Albus kept flourishing with their arms to show off all these proud Puddlemere supporters' absolutely lovely bodies.

Sirius was happily squeezing his newest additions. "Well, I must admit. Boobs are a lot more fun than a vagina."

Luna frowned. "Maybe you just don't know how to use your vagina?"

Sirius paused and looked down at his shapely hips and slender legs. "Maybe I don't."

Luna nodded. "I can tie a cherry in a knot."

Sirius' eyebrows went way up. "Wow."

"Or, if you like..." Luna tilted her head thinking. "Harry, do you have a ping pong ball I can borrow?"

CHAPTER SIXTEEN

"I can't believe we won!" Ron cheered. "Our seeker blows dragon dung! Half the time he gets distracted by the opposing seeker's arse!"

Remus shrugged with a smile. "Well, that actually may be the reason you won this time."

"Hey now!" James frowned. "You know darn good and well Puddlemere should be protesting this match! That's about as clear a case of fan interference as there is."

"But it was a Puddlemere supporter, wasn't it?" Ron argued diplomatically. "I'm pretty sure Luna was wearing a Puddlemere United Superfan Sisters of Yesteryear official original outfit."

James shook his head and looked down, grateful that they got their own proper bodies and clothes back once they left the luxury box, even if he did still have the Venerio curse. "I can't believe Puddlemere's seeker was so easily distracted."

"Did anyone see which catch happened first?" Sirius asked.

Ron nodded. "It was Puddlemere's of course. He broke off the chasing the snitch in his power dive and grabbed the ping pong ball a good two seconds before our seeker got to the snitch."

Tonks was still shaking her head in disbelief. "I can't believe this tiny blonde can launch a ping pong ball that far!"

Luna explained. "Anytime I seem to be spacing out, it's because I'm focusing on my Kegels."

"What?" Hermione asked, feeling as though a big piece of the Luna puzzle was just revealed.

Harry nodded. "She works out."

Ron shook his head, smiling at Luna. "I was watching the players. Never even saw you throw that ping pong ball."

Luna smiled innocently while everyone else seemed to be having slight coughing fits. Albus was smiling blissfully and added, "I wouldn't be surprised if no one saw her throwing it."

Nicholas snickered and held on tight to Hermione, to keep her from smacking him. "Yes well... I think congratulations are in order, Mr. Weasley."

"Yah mate," Harry grinned. "Congrats! This one game winning streak equals your best streak of last year, right?"

Ron nodded. "Yup, we're heating up now!"

Nicholas coughed and added, "Yes, Mr. Weasley, I am pleased with your team's success, but that wasn't what I meant."

"What do you... ohh!" Ron had a goofy smile. "How'd you know?"

Nicholas tapped his temple. "It's my all-seeing eye."

"Right," Ron shook his head. "Anyways mate, I wanted to let you guys all know... I'm getting married!"

"No way!" Fred exclaimed.

George grinned, "So who's the lucky flobberworm?"

"She must have been drunk!" Ginny's eyes widened in disbelief. "Oh crap, Ron. Is she pregnant?"

"That's great! Congratulations!" Harry cheered his friend. "So when is the baby due?"

Ron looked smitten and still surprised. "I couldn't believe she said yes! And no, she's not pregnant. At least, I don't think so..." Ron finished scratching his head.

Harry paused and carefully asked, "We are talking about Michelle, right?"

Ron nodded. "Yup!"

"Nice one!" Harry grinned. "She's a good catch. Don't mess this up."

"And she's really freaking hot too!" Ron yelled.

Albus chuckled at his enthusiasm. "Have you two lovebirds made any plans yet?"

Ron remembered what he was doing. "Oh right! Yeah, we're going to have a spring wedding." He turned to Harry and looked hopeful. "You're going to be my best man, right?"

Harry smiled back a little shocked. "You want me to? Not one of your brothers?"

Ron shook his head. "Fuck them!"

"Alright then," Harry grinned. "Of course I'll be your best man!"

"Thanks Harry," Ron nodded. "In case you couldn't guess, Michelle's older sister is her maid of honor, so... that should make for some fun!"

Harry rolled his eyes. "Something tells me Cho might shed a few tears seeing her little sister getting shackled."

"Shrieked like a bloody banshee when we told her," Ron said with a wince. "And yeah... I'd say it's time to invest in Kleenex before word of our nuptials hits the market."

"Damn," Harry said. "I didn't even realize you two were that serious already. It's only been what... three months?"

"Almost four," Ron corrected. "And yeah... I don't know what came over me. Just woke up one morning, and realized she was the first girl I could think of who still looked really hot in the morning. Decided

that meant she was the one. And I was getting sick of other guys hitting on her.”

James smiled brightly. “True love is a beautiful thing.”

“Mum’s going to have a relapse,” Ginny said imagining the oncoming conniption fit.

Ron nodded and asked Harry, “I was hoping you could put a protection ward on the two of us, or she might accidentally suffocate us or break our backs when we tell her.”

George explained. “Just borrow one of Bill’s kids and hold it out in front of you. It’s the only way I’ve found that works.”

Harry shrugged. “I have Dobby slip her muscle weakening potions before I ever head over to the Burrow.”

Fred and George looked at Harry in awe. “That’s brilliant! We should have done that years ago.”

Harry shrugged. “Well, they are dangerously addictive.”

Fred waved him off. “Details.”

Sirius grinned at Harry. “You do realize what this means?”

Harry looked at his godfather curiously. “What?”

“It means you have to throw the bachelor party!”

“Oh,” Harry said having not considered that. He turned to Ron, “You do want a bachelor party, right?”

Ron looked disgusted. “Why the hell do you think I asked you to be best man?” He pointed to his twin brothers. “Those two idiots would transfigure a couple of goats into women and try to get me to play some new game called Exploding Snatch.”

Fred looked at George. “That’s not a bad idea.”

Harry smiled at Ron. "Don't worry. I think I can come up with something."

Ron shook his finger at Harry. "And no polyjuiced hookers looking like my fiancée!"

"What?" Sirius moaned. "But that's half the fun!"

Ron looked at the hurt look on Padfoot's face. "Okay..." He reluctantly agreed. "But no more than a half dozen of them can look like Michelle!"

Harry looked at Ron oddly. "I'll try to restrain myself."
"Apprentice!" Severus loudly called with a smile. "Is there anything interesting in full color and taking up the front page of today's paper?"

Draco smiled brightly. "Why it looks like a picture of some Quidditch fans at the match on Saturday."

"How interesting," Severus grinned. "Do you recognize any of the faces in the picture?"

Draco nodded. "I most certainly do! Why that's Professor Prongs, Padfoot, and Bessie! Looks like a gaggle of Weasels and Luna Lovegood too."

"Really?" Severus announced having attracted much attention from the students. "And do you recognize any of the bodies?"

Draco shrugged. "I'm no expert, but those look like identical nearly naked female bodies on the whole lot of them."

"You certainly aren't an expert," James grumbled though happy to be able to readjust his freshly restored member.

"Is that so, Professor Prongs?" Draco asked loudly. "Care to comment on you curvaceous shapely exhibitionist performance?"

“Well, if you were an expert,” James retorted equally loudly before mumbling quieter, “or at least not afraid of the female form.” He continued in a voice that carried through the hall, “You would have noticed that Luna’s body is quite different from the others.”

Draco looked at the picture a little closer. “Oh, so hers is. Well... that certainly makes you look much less foolish.”

“Yeah!” James insisted before detecting the sarcasm in Draco’s inflection. He finished weakly. “Yeah.”

“Professor Prongs!” Hagrid came into the Great Hall. “Err... can yeh come outside? This’ll jus’ take a momen’.”

James got up and looked over at Harry curiously. “Yeah sure Hagrid. What’s up?”

James got up and dutifully followed the large Care of Magical Creatures Professor.

Sirius and Lily scrambled to follow him. Harry asked his godfather, “Where are you going?”

Sirius looked at Harry like he was crazy. “You think I don’t want to see whatever you’ve cooked up now?”

Harry hurried to follow him. “I’m not even sure what this is about. That’s not to say I didn’t necessarily cook it up, just that I’m not sure what’s going on.”

They all slowly followed, keeping their distance listening in on Hagrid and James. Hagrid was explaining, “Ah’m not even sure. Bane jus’ came outta the forest screaming and asking for yeh.”

James looked confused. “Bane?”

“Centaur,” Hagrid explained. “Ruddy stargazers were all upset ‘bout some prancing, annoying sumthin’ or otheh.”

James turned around and saw Sirius, Lily, and Harry following him looking curious. "What does a centaur want from me?"

Hagrid shook his head. "No idea. But he wudnah hurt you. He jus' seemed irritated."

"Harry?" Sirius asked as they followed James and Hagrid to the edge of the forest.

Harry shook his head honestly. "This isn't anything I did."

"Prongs!" An angry voice yelled out from the Forbidden Forest.

"Yeah," James called back. "That's me."

"You need to take care of-" Bane ordered before getting a good look at James. "Holy hell in a hag's handbasket! What are you?" Bane and the two other centaurs with him all snapped their gazes skyward apparently consulting the stars that were visible during the day. Bane looked back at James. "Merciful heavens! You're one of Potter's experiments!"

"Excuse me?" James looked a little panicked and wondered if Hagrid was having trouble keeping his mouth shut as usual.

Bane shook his head. "Never mind. I don't want to know. Cheeky wizard brat is violating the natural order even more than usual."

Sirius looked at Harry and asked quietly, "When did you piss off the centaurs?"

Harry grinned mischievously. "Sometimes I bewitch the entire sky over the Forbidden Forest. Make the stars spell out lewd words and some crude doodles involving centaur and witch relationships."

Lily tried to scold Harry but her heart wasn't exactly in it given the grin she had.

"Bane!" Ronan called out next to him. "Get to the point."

“Right, Prongs,” Bane suddenly remembered what he was doing. “Take care of those bloody idiot deer! They keep strolling into our stargazing circles and onto centaur restricted territory! Always prancing and posturing like they’re striking a pose for a picture. Stupid ingratiating mammalian inbred...”

“What?” James asked confused. “Why are idiot deer my problem?”

Bane looked at him and was restraining himself from kicking this wizard. “Because... because... you know what? Why don’t you take a look for yourself?”

Bane put his thumb and middle finger into his mouth and whistled a loud shrieking whistle.

There was a distant rumbling from the forest that slowly gained speed. Harry, Sirius, and Lily all looked extremely amused and were trying to identify the incoming pack of idiot deer.

As the first ones began to come into view, they seemed to spot James and then pick up speed sprinting straight at him.

Harry and Sirius stared dumbly at the sight of a relatively normal looking deer, other than thick black hair growing from the top of their heads. Lily’s eyes were wide, though she seemed to look a little pleased. The rampaging pack of deer began to bay an odd high-pitched sound. “Daaa!”

James saw the deer charging him, looked at Hagrid’s confused expression, and the unhelpful stoic impressions the centaurs wore on their faces. He knew there was only one thing he could do in this situation. Without another thought, James turned tail and ran from the rampaging idiot deer.

The pack cleared the edge of the forest and now there were probably two dozen deer, all with what looked like bad, black untamable toupees. They chased after Professor Prongs, continuing to bay loudly. “Daaa!”

Sirius, Harry, and Lily just watched James sprint by, calling out "Help!" They made no effort to assist him, though they did clear the path for the idiot deer stampede. "Daaaa!" The deer called out as they ran past.

Sirius kept his eyes on the sight of his best friend running as fast as he could, and the dust cloud getting kicked up by a score and then some of deer chasing after him. Without tearing his eyes from the scene he asked, "Harry?"

"Mmm-hmm?" Harry replied also keeping his eye on the deer.

"This isn't your doing?"

"Nope," Harry assured him. "This is a bit more... surreal than my style."

"Daaa!" One of the deer at the back of the pack slowed down a little and looked at Harry oddly. "Bro?"

Sirius watched the deer realize it had fallen behind and just sprint to catch up with the rest of the pack. "Okay Harry," Sirius replied with a nod, "If you say so."

Harry and Sirius were snickering to see James dive headfirst into the lake. He was swimming as fast as he could to center in hopes the rampaging pack wouldn't follow him. They didn't. They just stopped at the edge and called out, "Daaa!"

"Umm... Bessie?" Sirius asked. "You okay?"

"Do I look okay?"

Harry and Sirius traded a glance. Sirius answered, "Err... yeah. You look fine."

"Oh," Lily said. "Okay." She scrunched her face to look angry. "How about now?"

Harry and Sirius looked at each other. "Now you look constipated."

Lily just giggled. "Alright fine. I may have had an idea something like this was coming."

"Bessie!" Sirius scolded. "Working against your own team!"

Lily shook her head. "No, it wasn't me. Albus just... well, Albus is scared of me. So he warned me not to take anything I saw today too seriously."

Harry nodded. "This certainly has his flair to it."

Sirius shook his head. "I never would have guessed the old kook had it in him."

Harry grinned proudly. "It seems everyone near to me, discovers their mischievous streak with enough exposure to my demented personality."

Lily's mouth quirked into a half grin. "I'm not sure if that comes from your father or me."

Harry shrugged. "I used to think it was all me, but now I'm not so sure."

Sirius saw James struggling to doggy paddle while the Giant Squid kept dunking him underwater. "You going to help your husband there, Bessie?"

She looked at Sirius. "You realize how much embarrassment we've suffered because he picked us for his team?"

Sirius nodded. "Good point. Hope the water's cold enough."

Harry just stood there enjoying the show.

"Actually," Sirius began. "Harry, could I talk with you somewhere? Apprentice to Master?"

Harry shrugged. "Sure... Bessie? You okay out here?"

Lily nodded kept her gaze on the lake. "Yeah, I think I want to watch the King of Idiot Deer a bit more."

Harry and Sirius settled themselves into the DADA office, and Harry threw up some privacy spells to ensure they wouldn't be disturbed. "What's up, Padfoot?"

Padfoot sighed. "This prank war is starting to get to me. I hate losing!"

Harry grinned. "Losing? Is that like being consistently and constantly humiliated?"

Sirius rolled his eyes. "Yes, yes. Consistently and constantly humiliated. That's fine and dandy. I don't mind being subject to your worst over and over again. It's just that none of our pranks are working!"

Harry sat back and smirked.

"You're denying us our oxygen! Our lifeblood! I have this personal need to prank and you keep ruining our efforts!" Sirius ranted. "It's one thing if there's a Dark Lord out there with all the murdering and evil deeds and crud. Then I can put off most pranking because fighting back becomes important to ensure a future full of pranks. But there's no Dark Lord out there! And I can't take this! I can't defect sides in a Marauder's Honor challenge, but seriously Harry. Throw me a bone here!"

Harry waited until his godfather finished. "You feel better?"

"No!" Sirius moaned. "Ranting isn't a prank!"

Harry was tapping his chin. "You know, Padfoot, I think I may be able to help you out."

Sirius frowned. "I'm not turning Snivellus on my team!"

Harry rolled his eyes. "I'm not talking about turning traitor in the prank war. I'm suggesting we come up with our own prank outside of the prank war."

Sirius' eyes perked up. "What?"

"Forget teams, forget Marauders, this isn't about them." Harry stood up proudly and snapped off a salute. "For the glory and honor of Hufflepuff! Or all the Marauders! Or just because, we should prank the school!"

Sirius looked hopeful. "We can do that?"

Harry shrugged. "Why not? We're not trading prank war secrets here. Just moonlighting on a little side job, so that you can get your fix."

"My fix! Yes, my fix!" Sirius eagerly repeated. "This is just what I need. A prank! And one that you and your bloody hidden army won't ruin!"

Harry's eyes flared angrily. "Who told you about my army?"

Sirius backed up in fright. "What? You do have an army?"

Harry laughed. "Oh god, Sirius. You really do need help."

Sirius sighed and sat back. "See? I can't even tell when you're joking or not! And right now, the only thing I can think of is the fact that you never denied having an army."

Harry grinned brightly. "Moving on... what did you want to do?"

Sirius grumbled, fearing yet another organized revolution he might miss out on. "For the prank? Hmm... all our best ideas keep getting rebuffed before they happen, so I don't know. You got any ideas you've rejected or not used yet?"

Harry thought about it. "Well, I'm getting a bit tired of pretty much anything dealing with girly bits and bodily functions."

Sirius sighed. "Those are the trusty classics, and about ninety-five percent of my suggestions, but I do agree they've been done to death. And since we cannot really target anyone specific, as all the good targets are on yours or my team, we probably need an all-encompassing sort of thing here."

"Which means likely students," Harry continued. "And therefore nothing too horribly painful. That makes it a bit trickier."

"Do you feel some subtle moral lesson or stupid-arse hidden meaning is necessary?"

Harry raised an eyebrow. "Do I look like a bitch?"

"Okay," Sirius grinned. "Good. Those can have their place on occasion, but for the most part that's just an easy way to ruin a good prank."

"I'm fully prepared for mild psychological scarring," Harry smiled. "Within reason, of course."

"What if we dug up some bodies and made a special meal for everyone?"

Harry looked at his godfather a bit worried. "What?"

Sirius shrugged. "Show the world what it's like to be death eaters."

Harry groaned. "No Padfoot. That's horrible and probably too far." Harry paused before adding another, "Probably."

"Alright, alright," Sirius grumbled. "Lily wouldn't let me try it on your team either."

Harry shook his head ruefully. "I could trick everyone's vision into black and white."

Sirius shook his head. "No. That's as bad as turning something pink and calling that a prank. Something a bit more devastating. What if we turned everyone into a muggle?"

"Nope," Harry said immediately. "I did that last year. Ended up being just a lot more work for me."

Sirius raised an eyebrow. "I didn't think that would be possible."

"Well," Harry clarified. "It was sort of an experiment Nicholas and I accidentally conducted. We didn't really make everyone muggles, we just had a magic nullification field about five miles in diameter from here for a couple days. We were capable of magic, and that was when Hogwarts and I bonded sort of, because I had to wake her back up. But no one else could do anything."

"Impressive."

Harry nodded. "Dementor Blood thing. With a pre-made special potion the nullification won't affect you."

"Bet that would make fighting Death Eaters a lot easier."

Harry nodded. "Or a hell of a lot harder if the Death Eaters could do it. But we didn't experiment or discover much on Dementor Blood until Tommy and his bitches were all pretty much rounded up."

Sirius was scratching his head. "Maybe we could resurrect him?"

"You want to bring back Voldemort?"

"Sure. Why not?" Sirius said as his eyes lit up with an idea. "We could turn him into the NEWT exam for DADA."

Harry considered it. "As much as I would enjoy finding a way to make him immortal but nothing more than a test, I think his mere appearance might bring up a few too many bad memories."

"Oh right," Sirius agreed. "Yeah, that'd be bad."

Harry was thinking. "What can we do that would horrify people?"

Sirius looked up hopefully, "And giving them all breasts..."

“Girlie bits,” Harry reminded.

Sirius sighed. “What if we drugged them all?”

Harry frowned. “Sort of been done at last year’s opening feast.”

“Sort of?”

Harry smiled. “Neville gave the house elves a delicious seasoning and is completely ignorant of potential misuses of Cannabis.”

Sirius laughed. “I thought the pesto tasted funny. What happened?”

“First time in Hogwarts’ history, the house-elves ran out of food.”

Sirius laughed out loud.

“The whole staff just kept commenting on how it was the most delicious thing ever. Albus was excited to have discovered his brother’s secret recipe.”

“Merlin, I wish I’d seen that.”

Harry smiled. “It was funny seeing the students fighting over the last few desserts.”

Sirius sat back pensively. “Something with a monkey? Monkeys are always funny.”

“Yeah they are!” Harry smiled. “But so are midgets. They’re pretty much always funny too.”

“So what then? Turn everyone into monkeys? Or midgets?” Sirius asked uncertainly. “Or midget monkeys?”

Harry could only giggle. “No, that’s...” He couldn’t help his girlish giggling. “Too easy... midget monkeys.”

“What if we made all the classroom seats into disillusioned bidets?” Sirius considered. “Maybe try and make them triggered by yawning? Or just opening your mouth?”

Harry nodded. “That’s not a bad idea. But it’s not jumping out at me as the right one.” Harry scratched his chin. “Maybe something more Hufflepuff-ish?”

“What would be Hufflepuff-ish?”

Harry considered the stereotypes. “Fatten them all up a hundred pounds or so?”

Sirius shrugged. “What if got them all to face the thirty-ninth worst fear?”

“Thirty-ninth?” Harry asked.

“Well... it would be more annoying and funny than scary.”

Harry smiled. “I keep thinking of midget monkeys and feeling like we’re missing out if we don’t use them. And you know it might be fun to play on the trust people have in me...”

Sirius raised an eyebrow. “You got something in mind?”

“I’ve got an idea I’m piecing together,” Harry nodded. “How about a good old-fashioned elaborate ruse? I think my other apprentice has proven himself quite skilled and we’ll need Nicky’s help too. I’m certain he’ll love this. Yeah... yeah. Here’s what we’ll do...”

“Albus,” Harry warned. “I’ve got another test for Dementor Blood. This time dealing with its temporal capabilities.”

Albus raised an eyebrow. “Are you going to be endangering the student body?”

Harry shrugged. “I can promise that nothing about this will hurt them. I just need to make sure it’s scalar and not too greatly affected by ambient magic.”

“And if I say no?” Albus asked.

Harry smiled. “Then Nicholas and maybe... Minerva, yeah Minerva, will have an accident and argument and it’ll happen anyway.”

Albus rolled his eyes. “Fine. Just be careful please.”

“Am I ever anything but?” Harry asked highly insulted that Albus even had to say that.

“Harry...” Albus sighed.

“Fine,” Harry agreed. “Just make sure I’m not disturbed. There’s no magical backlash danger or anything like that, it’s just tedious and a bit... picky. But if we could have the entire staff and student body to attend lunch that would be ideal.”

Albus informed everyone at breakfast that lunch was mandatory and to make sure all of their classmates knew. He stood up at lunch, “Attention students. May I have your attention please?” Once he saw he had all eyes on him. “Professor Potter has a large scale experiment he is going to be performing. He assures me, no one will be in any danger. And I thought many of you might like the opportunity to unnerve him through whispers and stares. Please make sure you do not disturb him. We just wish to make sure he is uncomfortable while he works on something that may or may not be historic.”

Harry quickly decided it was a good thing he didn’t bring Albus in on this one. Harry knew he’d figure it out soon enough, but it was more fun to leave him guessing. “Thank you, Headmaster. Your concern and respect is truly a treasure.”

Harry seated himself in the exact center of the Great Hall, and with a gentle push of his hands, shifted the middle House tables outwards just a bit, giving him almost ten feet on either side.

He ignored all the curious looks and carved a large circle into the stone floor with a turn of his finger. He had wands in each hand and was drawing numerous runes straight into the air. After each one, he

would thrust them down where they would be sucked into the ground and the entire hall would flash with each one. New symbols and shapes kept appearing into the carved stone floor with each rune, beginning with a large pentagram and then various other ancient looking hieroglyphs.

Hermione and Albus were watching completely fascinated, but unable to identify many of the markings. They were whispering, guessing at the meanings. "I see some sort of lock on magical emanations, lock on impenetrable stone, and I think that one should protect from... evil monkeys?"

Albus corrected her, "Actually it protects from all simians with malicious intent."

Harry pulled out a small vial glowing bright white. He looked up and said, "Here goes nothing." He very carefully dripped out a single drop into the center of the pentagram. While the liquid landed, the white light began flowing outward down all the cracks and connections within the pentagram until it hit the edge of the circle and column of white light shot up into the air, hiding Harry from view and forcing everyone watching to look away.

Harry slowly sat up. "Alright... I think it worked."

No one around anywhere could tell anything different at all.

"What is it you have done, Professor Potter?" Albus asked curiously unable to tell any difference, though his connection to Hogwarts informed him there was something clearly awry.

Harry waved his hand towards a wall facing the Forbidden Forest, and it shimmered away and became transparent. Harry looked closely at the view and then exclaimed. "There! See the birds over the Forest?"

Albus looked out intently and realized right away, the scene appeared eerily static. The birds Harry pointed out were frozen, not moving in the slightest. "What have you done?"

Harry smiled. "I've pulled us outside of time."

Albus looked at Harry impressed and worried.

"It's just temporary, don't worry."

Albus pulled out his lunar pocketwatch and saw that it still was working.

Harry blushed. "Oh yeah. All of our watches are going to be a little bit off now. For however long we stay like this."

"And how long is that?" Albus asked.

"Until I cancel the spell, or the solution is completely used up. For this, I've just done it to the Great Hall, and one drop is only good for about ten minutes. Give or take..."

"Give or take?" Albus asked.

Harry nodded. "It seems to be variable based upon ambient magic as well as magical beings contained within the field. The effect doesn't seem to vary more than ten to twenty percent, but I've been trying to determine how much and why."

Albus nodded taking notice of a few bugs that were just outside and locked into their position in flight.

Sirius whispered to James, "Come on Prongs! This is our perfect chance! He's exhausted from doing that, and won't be expecting anything! He's already told us this will work itself out in a couple minutes anyways!"

James frowned. "I'm not sure we should mess with this. It seems pretty volatile."

"Grow some testiculars, you nancy boy!" Sirius whispered angrily. "Just distract Albus, and I'll get Harry."

James grumbled and went over to the Headmaster. "So Albus... do you distract easily?"

"What?" Albus asked the Assistant Transfiguration Professor curiously.

"Padfoot!" Harry yelled. "No! What're you... oh fuck me."

Albus barely looked over towards Harry when he saw the broken glowing vial on the ground. All of the runes and carvings cycled quickly from white to green to red. A massive flash exploded outward from the center of the Hall blinding everyone there and knocking them to the ground feeling woozy.

"Oww my head," Harry said standing up. "What happened? The spell ended itself! Why'd it end? And Padfoot! What the hell were you thinking?"

Sirius groaned. He looked over at his godson and snickered. "Your hair is blonde."

Harry looked up and rolled his eyes. He closed his eyes and metamorphed his hair back to its normal color.

"Ahh fiddlesticks," Sirius exclaimed. "You're no fun."

Only then did Harry look over and see where everyone was looking. "Holy mother of Merlin!"

The transparent wall no longer showed an unmoving scene of the Forbidden Forest. Now it showed a busy bustling, futuristic floating city and only dark wastelands where the Forest used to be.

Harry looked down at the cracked circle and the empty vial of solution. He waved his hand and said loudly, "Tempus!" There was a haze and the spell spit out, 2:06 PM, March 24, 3121.

"Professor Potter!" Albus yelled out hysterically. "Harry! You said we weren't in any danger!"

Harry just stared at the date and time for a couple seconds and then turned to Albus. "No... I said no one would be hurt. And besides... we may not be in any danger."

Padfoot pulled out his wand and also cast a Tempus getting the same result. "You gotta be kidding me."

A loud pop, a massive swirl of sparks, and there appeared with a long beard Harry's other apprentice, Dobby.

"Harry Potter!" Dobby called out as he fell backwards in shock. "I knew you weren't dead!"

"Dobby?" Harry asked. "What's going on? How are you alive?"

"Not now, dumb ass!" Dobby scolded. "I detected a squibstick! You all must hide your squibsticks or they will kill you!"

"Squibstick?" Padfoot asked. "What's that?"

"Oh right!" Dobby exclaimed. "You guys used to call them... call them... oh Twinky, what are those artifacts called..." He was frantically banging his head to jog his memory. "Oh! Wands! That's it! Wands!"

Albus had a strong feeling they were being subjected to some ruse, but felt like playing along. This was too much fun. "Why can we not use our wands?"

"A weak house-wizard is just used for dragonfeed! All the hopeless magic users that rely on squibsticks are considered useless!" Dobby insisted. "Do not use your wands unless you want to die!"

"House-elf!" Severus scolded. "You are not to give us-"

The Potions Professor was interrupted by a snap of Dobby's fingers and he slammed into the back wall with a loud fleshy splat. "I don't have time to baby you idiots. Follow my lead, if you want to live." He snarled at all the frightened faces.

"Dobby?" Harry asked gently.

“Harry?” Dobby asked in response.

“Can you tell us what’s going on? How you’re still alive or-”

Dobby clapped his hands three times loudly and silenced not just Harry, but every wizard there. The doors to the Great Hall melted away without even burning. In walked a troop of a dozen armored and proud looking house elves.

“High Lord Dobby,” the elf in the lead snarled. “I should have guessed you would be here already.”

“Greetings Chief Wiggy,” Dobby said with a bow and smile. “I am here, and you have caught me before I had a chance to put away my house-wizards.”

Chief Wiggy looked around the room. “These all belong to you?”

Dobby gave everyone a sharp look. “Yes, they do.” Slowly all of the people nodded their heads, showing their agreement.

Chief Wiggy gave them all angry stares. “We detected a squibstick.”

Dobby nodded. “My apologies,” He bowed his head. “If you cannot tell from their silly dresses, I was recreating some ancient practices.” Dobby walked over to Padfoot and slapped him right across the face knocking him to the ground. “This whelp didn’t understand they were just for show and tried to channel magic through one.”

Sirius just sat there rubbing his jaw, surprised at how hard Dobby hit him.

Dobby walked over and stood on top of Padfoot’s chest. “Trust me, Chief Wiggy. His insolence will be dealt with.”

“Very well,” Chief Wiggy reluctantly admitted. “But make no mistake, the Empress will hear of this.”

Dobby forced a smile onto his face. "I would expect no less." He just stared at Chief Wiggy, silently waiting for him to leave.

Chief Wiggy stared Dobby down for a few seconds, before turning around to leave. As he walked out, he snarled, "Keep a tighter leash on your pets, High Lord Dobby. Or not even your status will save you."

Dobby said nothing and waited for all the other elves to leave the hall. Once they were gone, Dobby snapped his fingers, and waved his hand. A large steel door materialized in front of Dobby, then flew and wedged itself sealing off the Great Hall again.

Dobby sat down in a chair that magically appeared below him. "Phew. That was too close."

Harry made several motions towards himself, trying to dispel the silencing charm. After apparently being unable to do it, he tapped Dobby on the shoulder.

"Oh right," Dobby said. "Sorry Harry." A snap of Dobby's fingers and the silencing charm was gone.

Harry saw Albus seemed to be having fun, but everyone else looked scared. "Umm Dobby? You mind bringing us up to date on current events here?"

Dobby sighed and sat back. "Harry... I... I... Well, I guess I'm just about all that's left of the Resistance."

Albus stepped up and joined in. "The Resistance?"

"Those of us that believe house-wizards deserve freedom."

"What!" Draco yelled. "Wizards are nothing but slaves? To house-elves?"

A snap of Dobby's fingers and Draco flew backwards into the wall next to Severus. "I am an elf, and will not allow you to disrespect me."

You should be grateful no other elf heard that, or you would be dead before you could blink.”

“What happened?” Harry asked. “And what of the rest of our families?”

Dobby sighed. “We tried to find you. We wanted to figure out what happened to all of you, but Hogwarts was protecting you in a way none of us could reach. Your families?” Dobby looked at all the timid frightened children. “They all died out probably a millennium ago. You can take solace in the fact that it was still a century before the revolution.”

“The revolution?” Harry asked.

Dobby nodded with a sad face. “Too many house-wizards... err well, I guess they were just wizards at the time, kept looking down on the other magical races and creatures. The elf council decided it had gone on far enough, and rescinded all of their bonds to wizards. They organized, fought back, and systematically exterminated over half of the human race, wizard and muggle alike in the span of just two years.”

“Great Merlin!” James gasped.

“Do not say his name!” Dobby snarled. “Never mention any wizard’s name if you value your life!”

James gulped. “Sorry.”

Dobby waved him off. “You couldn’t know. And I don’t blame you. It was just centuries of oppression, enslavement, and mistreatment that came back to haunt the human race.”

“How are you still alive?” Harry asked him.

Dobby smiled. “There is much about elves you do not know. But I am the oldest elf, and respected for that. I’ve had help from a house-wizard ally as well. He’s about the only human left capable of thinking for himself.”

“Who?” Harry asked.

Dobby grinned mischievously. “The Empress’s personal house-wizard. Speaking of... I must talk to him. Do not do anything stupid. I will be back.” And without a sound Dobby disappeared leaving all the students and staff alone in the Great Hall.

“What the hell happened?” A student called out.

“Shh!” Harry called back. “Not so loud! We don’t want to attract attention. In case you didn’t notice, I wasn’t even able to cancel the silencing charm on me. These elves are a lot more powerful than I think any of us remember.” Harry thought about it. “Or maybe they’ve always been this powerful, just never needed to show it.”

“Freaking house-... err not house, just elves.” Sirius said with a shake of his head. “Who could have imagined this?”

Hermione jumped up. “I told you! I tried to tell you all! But would you listen to me? Noooo... silly little muggleborn Granger!” She mocked. “They like to work! It’s fun for them!” Her face contorted in fury, “Wizarding society had this coming!”

Dobby popped right back into the hall. “She’s coming! Oh Twinky help us all!” Dobby shook his head. “Trust her house-wizard! He will help you no matter how it may appear! I’ll do what I can. Okay, quick! Everyone behind me, and get on your knees!” Dobby ordered.

No one moved.

“Now!” Dobby forcefully ordered. They all snapped into motion and arranged themselves behind Dobby, dropping into subservient positions.

The steel door quickly melted into nothing as a regal looking elf led the way in, completely surrounded by ten other hooded beings. Their faces were not visible but they stalked with a predator’s gait.

Albus saw the Empress and couldn’t believe his eyes. “Winky?”

Out of nowhere, a wizard from behind her sprinted forward and backhanded Albus viciously across the cheek. "How dare you, you filthy house-wizard! Opening your mouth in the presence of my Mistress!"

Albus looked up and saw "Nicholas?"

Another slap across the cheek. "Do not call me that name! I am Bitchy, the personal house-wizard of the Empress!"

"High Lord Dobby?" the Empress inquired.

Dobby bowed his head and was down on one knee. "Yes, my Empress?"

"What is the meaning of this?"

"Just playing with my house-wizards Empress. I meant no disrespect."

The Empress observed the wizards all of which were keeping their heads down and occasionally stealing glances upward at her. "Kill the mouthy one."

Dobby looked over at Albus fearfully. "My Empress?"

"I said kill him," she calmly ordered. "Why do you hesitate?"

Dobby stood up proudly. "They are mine to do with as I please."

"Bitchy," the Empress ordered. "Kill them all."

Nicholas stalked over and stood right in front of Harry. He caught the eye of every student and staff member there and winked. He pulled out a vial of brightly shining solution that almost everyone there recognized. "Harry! You must hurry! This will freeze your time and rewind you back to before the experiment! Do it! Just the same as the way you arrived!"

Harry grabbed the vial from Nicholas and immediately began casting the runes all over again, this time reversing a few of the ones he needed to reverse. Nicholas turned back to face his Mistress, clapped his hands, and then held them firmly in front of him, separating the wizards from the elves.

“What is the meaning of this?” The Empress hollered. “How dare you! You will all die!”

Dobby clapped his hands, and reinforced the shield ward from his side, protecting the students and staff. “No, My Empress, they will not,” Dobby insisted as he settled back into an attack position. His speech patterns reverted back into a more comfortable tone for the wizards. “Not while Dobby still be Dobby!”

She pointed straight at Dobby and the ten hooded figures sprang into action and began attacking viciously with magic and blades. Dobby was bouncing all around defending from every direction to the best of his ability but taking many painful body blows, sending him crashing into the invisible shield Nicholas was holding up. “Hurry, Harry!” Nicholas urged while he strained under the pressure.

Dobby was losing and losing badly. One of the hooded warriors swung his blade in what would have been a killing blow, but Dobby managed to roll out of the way at the last minute. Dobby sprung into action and lunged towards the Empress herself for the first time. His arm extended forward and a brilliant flash of light went straight towards her. She calmly raised her hand deflecting the blow and freezing Dobby in place in the air.

“You are defeated, High Lord Dobby,” the Empress calmly explained while holding Dobby locked in place. “What hope did you have in fighting me? What could you have possibly expected to accomplish?”

“I may be defeated, but I haven’t lost,” Dobby replied as he coughed up blood and spat it to his left and looked her defiantly in the eye.

“You cannot move. Your energy has been expended. What could you hope to win?”

“Dobby didn’t need to beat you,” Dobby insisted through his struggles. “Dobby just needed to...” Dobby coughed and wheezed as his life was leaving him. “Dobby just needed to... stall you.” And then Dobby dropped his head no longer able to remain conscious or breathing. He fell to the ground lifeless as the Empress lowered her arm.

The Empress looked back at the wizards and it was at that moment she sent another magical shockwave towards the barrier.

Nicholas groaned under the strain. “Go now! I can’t take anymore. Just remember... all of you... must remember! The future is not set! There is no fate but what we make for ourselves!” With a whimper and a shudder, Nicholas Flamel also collapsed to the ground. His face looked happy and had a slight smile as it was that exact moment the circle in the stone floor of the Great Hall cycled up in brilliant red, green, and then white lights. Another magical flare exploded knocking everyone there backwards and dizzy.

As all the students slowly got up, and began looking around, the transparent wall once again showed the normal Forbidden Forest, and the birds flying above were moving as expected. Albus cast a Tempus and they were right back where they were supposed to be.

There were a number of house elves standing in the front half of the hall. They ran up to the students and staff. “Oh no! Young Masters! You’ve been hurt!” Winky called out. She turned to the other elves. “All of yous! Hurry! Get Masters food and water! Theys being exhausted and being hungry!”

The students were rubbing the crust from the eyes. Several of them cheered and were hugging each other. Albus smiled at Harry. Harry winked at him and jumped up. “Nicholas? Nicholas, are you here?”

Nicholas walked right in the Great Hall doors and slowly strode over to his girlfriend. He kissed Hermione on the cheek. “Yup. Thought I’d join the little lady for lunch.” He noticed where everyone was positioned. “Err... why were you all napping on the floor?”

“Never mind,” Harry said with a shake of his head. “Dobby?”

With a pop, Dobby appeared in his favorite poofy pirate shirt. “Yes Master?” He asked with a glorious twinkle in his eye.

Harry hugged the little feller and thrust him into the air for the students. He yelled out, “Praise be to Dobby!”

They all cheered back eagerly, “Praise be to Dobby!”

Dobby blushed and was dropping his head. He acted confused and was half-heartedly asking what was going on.

And Harry quickly added to all the students, “And now let’s never mention lunch today... ever again.”

Once more, they all agreed and cheered back, “Praise be to Dobby!”

Author’s Note: Thanks to dogbertcaroll, I borrowed his suggestion on the thirty-ninth fear. And man I had so much more planned for the futuristic world. There were going to be auctions for the house-wizards and forced to wear trash bags and cardboard boxes. But goodness, stupid little scene went on long enough, and ended up going about 2000 words over what I wanted it to. Reviews would be appreciated.

CHAPTER SEVENTEEN

Harry was sitting back smugly behind his desk in the DADA office, making no effort to hide his superior grin from the two girls sitting across from him.

Hermione huffed. "Just tell us already!"

"Tell you what, exactly?" Harry innocently asked.

Tonks furrowed her brow. "That that... phantasmagoric scene earlier was just a set up!"

"Oooh," Hermione's face heated up. "Good word, Tonks."

Tonks smiled brightly. "Thank you."

Harry raised an eyebrow. "Used the bathroom in Hermione's quarters?"

Tonks nodded remembering the Improve Your Vocabulary toilet paper for a moment and frowned. "You're avoiding the question."

Harry smiled and nodded appreciatively at Tonks. "And you're becoming more observant and intuitive. I like this side of you Tonks."

Tonks blushed a little and shyly replied, "Thanks."

Harry grinned. "I think it's always good to strive to be a better person."

"Well, I mean, I just thought," Tonks explained. "That it doesn't take much to try and-" Tonks stopped in mid-sentence and angrily shook her finger at Harry. "You're doing it again!"

Harry shook his head. "Like I said more observ-"

"Stop it!" Hermione snapped.

Harry looked at her slightly appalled. "I think some people could be making more of an effort to better themselves, as well as maintain their manners in polite company."

"Yeah really Hermione," Tonks agreed. "You know it only takes seventeen muscles to smile and-"

"Shut up!" Hermione interrupted again. "You're doing it too now."

Tonks looked affronted. "I am not. I'm just..." She stopped and turned to Harry realizing she had been stalling for him. "How the hell did you do that?"

"It's a gift." Harry shrugged. "And a curse."

"Silencio!" Hermione called out with her wand pointed at Tonks before the two could begin to sing It's a Jungle Out There and get sidetracked yet again. "Now dammit, Harry. Answer the question."

Harry waited patiently, saying nothing but smiling slightly.

Hermione huffed. "I'm going to hurt you."

Harry warily pointed out, "I'm still waiting to be asked a question. I've only heard orders and demands that were lacking in common courtesy."

Hermione pictured her power animal and calmed. "Did we travel a thousand years into the future?"

"Why does it matter?" Harry asked. "We're back to our proper time now."

"So we did?" Hermione asked.

Harry looked over at Tonks. "You see how she just jumps to conclusions? It's like we're not even here." The silent Tonks nodded in agreement, playfully frowning at Hermione's frustration.

"You just said we're back to our proper time now." Hermione insisted. "That implies that we did."

Harry shook his head. "No, that only implies that we may not have always been in this time. You inferred that meant we traveled a thousand years into the future."

Hermione sighed. "It seems impossible, but I know damn well Dementor Blood is off the charts in some of its arithmantical fields."

Harry rolled his eyes. "Honestly, you two. Why on earth would you believe that Nicholas Flamel could exist 1000 years in the future? Let alone Dobby. We'd theoretically been locked in stasis for over a millennium. I'm not immortal."

"Oh," Hermione realized. "Right. And the only way there could have been another Nicholas out there, would have been if one of the two of you were from a future, when you couldn't be, because you were in the stasis. Or you managed to go back over a thousand years, which if the Dementor Blood was able to do, then theoretically you could have been but that would mean-" Any further explanation was cut off because Tonks had just smacked Hermione in the back of the head.

Harry waved his hand and removed Tonks silencing spell. She immediately spoke up. "Dammit Hermy. I think I pulled a brain muscle."

Hermione blushed. "Sorry."

Harry rolled his eyes. "And I don't suppose you happened to notice either, but this particular Dementor Blood solution does not allow or permit time travel."

"What?" Tonks asked. "So you made that whole thing up?"

Harry shook his head. "Not at all. The first two times it was used are the two main ways it can be used, but I wouldn't test them on children." Harry thought about it. "Well, not all of them."

Tonks frowned. "I'm confused. How was that not time travel?"

Harry nodded and Hermione brightened at the opportunity to explain something. She straightened herself, adopted her Professor mode, and while she would never admit it, she was incredibly turned on every time she did this. "Because the solution doesn't actually take you forward or backward in time. It just manipulates how slowly or quickly time passes. The first drop basically stopped time or slowed it down to make it seem as though time stopped. The second larger spill caused a thousand years to pass within what seemed like a few seconds to us." Hermione was straightening her robes and as was her habit, paused in hopes of being awarded house points. "I'm assuming all those runes Harry cast are what would protect all the people in the field from the effects of aging."

"Not exactly," Harry corrected. "It's not necessary because within the field our bodies are affected and metabolize the same as normal time. So if we stop time, or actually slow it to the point it seems that way, we still will need to eat enough food for however long we're there. We could all age the rest of our lives and die, if the field lasted long enough, and the rest of the world would see it as instantaneous death from old age whenever the field finally ended. Or if we just compressed a week into a second, we'd still need a week's worth of food and water for that second until the field ended."

"What if the field never ended?" Tonks asked.

Harry shook his head. "That's not really possible, both from the need of solution to maintain it and our inability to ever see a field that never ended because it would be essentially outside of time. From outside the field, it would literally be less than a second for a billion years inside the field if the solution is at it's most potent. The runes were ensuring we couldn't leave the field and nothing else could enter into it."

"And that's why Nicholas showing up with a way to take you back a thousand years was completely impossible since that would require time travel." Hermione explained.

"Wait!" Tonks realized. "So that whole thing was just a prank?"

Harry's eyes twinkled. "Would you feel more comfortable if I said yes?"

Hermione huffed. "You just said it was!"

"Are you sure?" Harry asked. "I think I only assured you that I wasn't immortal. Never said anything about a prank."

Tonks sighed. "Why do you have to be such a bitch?"

Harry snickered. "Because it's fun?"

"See, Tonks?" Hermione sternly explained. "He's just trying to rile us up. It was a prank."

Harry nodded. "Whatever you say, Hermione. If believing it was a prank is what you need to believe, you go on believing that."

Hermione smiled feeling the satisfaction of knowing she was right.

A chill blew across the DADA office and a black swirl of smoke appeared. The thick fog spun and materialized into a large recognizable dementor. Bob immediately yelled out, "Harry! What's going on? All the dementors are going crazy saying people just traveled over a thousand years from the future!"

Tonks and Hermione sat there in shock, confused as all hell. Both because this was unwelcome information to get, and also because a dementor appearing and speaking English was not an everyday occurrence.

"Ooo," Bob winced. "Have I come at a bad time?" He looked Hermione and Tonks up and down. "Or are these our time travelers?"

Hermione and Tonks just sat there silently staring at Bob.

Bob raised his decayed right hand into the air. "Welcome to the early twenty-first century. I'm sorry to inform we still enslave women." Bob turned to Harry. "Which one is yours, and which one do I get?"

Harry snickered at the pale, confused looks on both girls faces. "Hermione, Tonks, I suppose it's time to properly introduce you to Bob." Harry shook his head at Bob. "Bob, I'd like you to meet Professor Granger and Caretaker Tonks."

Bob's arm dropped and shoulders sagged. "Damn. Your scent is all over both of these two already. Banging the hot future babes before anyone even has a chance."

"Excuse me!" Hermione yelled indignantly neither admitting nor denying any and all said banging.

Harry just laughed. "Oh shut it, Bob. You know very well who these two are, even if they did just come from over a millennium into the future."

"We did?" Tonks asked still a bit scared of the dementor.

Harry smiled victoriously. "I don't know. Did you?"

Hermione sighed. "Harry, die. Die slow. Bob, are you... are you a dementor?"

Bob shrugged. "I don't know. Am I?"

Harry and Bob high-fived while Hermione purpled and Tonks had her eyes shut due to the oncoming headache.

Bob chuckled, "Yes Professor Granger I am a dementor. Just was having a spot of fun with you. I do so enjoy tormenting Harry. And any girl silly enough to date this fool, deserves a bit of jibing too."

Hermione raised an eyebrow. "I'm not dating Harry."

Bob nodded. "Of course not. You prefer the old hairy," Bob broke out the mocking quote fingers, "immortal Nicholas Flamel. And yes, I know that both of you know Nicky's dirty little secret."

"Hey!" Hermione complained to Harry. "You said everyone who knew was in the room at our first prank team meeting!"

Harry shook his head. "No Hermione, I said all the wizards who knew were." Harry put his hands on his hips and mock scolded. "Honestly Hermione. These prejudices of yours hurt you just as much as others."

"Oh shush," Hermione pouted. "I completely forgot you even picked 'Bob' for our team. Never mind that I had no idea who he was." She furrowed her brow. "Or what he was."

"Yes well," Bob nodded. "If it helps you and Miss Tonks are only the..." Bob paused and was counting in his head, "sixth and seventh... or is it seventh and eighth... of Harry's friends to meet the real me."

Hermione and Tonks looked a little affronted that they didn't know this and so many others did. Bob was grinning brightly, "Most people I run into only get to meet the big bad evil dementor who talks like this: Mmmmmate Jjjjjjuice."

"That was you!" Tonks pointed remembering that cold and fear she felt that day. "You were the one who was attacking students for DADA class."

Bob took a slight bow. "I try to help where I can."

"So what brings you by, Bob?" Harry asked.

Bob grinned. "First, I wanted to find out why people were jumping around in time."

"No one jumped around in time!" Hermione insisted angrily.

"Really?" Bob asked. "How are you so certain?"

Hermione sighed, desperately hoping not to go through this again. "Because Bob-blood isn't for time travel. It just affects the speed at which it passes within a field."

Bob nodded. "First off, that wasn't my blood that was another dementor's. And you're right the most stable solution reacts that way. But there are many other rituals and ways to use magic with my species' blood that do permit time travel, likely on scales not seen before."

Harry looked at Bob. "Err, Bob. I don't mind the still in development secrets being known by these two, but you do realize you've just lined yourself up for a five hour theoretical conversation that Hermione must have before she can even function as a human anymore?"

"Oops," Bob said. "My apologies Miss Granger, but the time magics for actual travel are, so far, completely unpredictable. And if you would like a conversation, I'd be happy to oblige you, but first I do need to have a brief conversation with Harry."

Hermione gave Harry an evil eye. "I do not need to know everything, Harry! I can function you know." She and Tonks got up to leave. Just as Hermione was almost out the door, she called back, "I'll be waiting in my office for you, Bob. Come see me before you leave."

Bob inclined his head. "Yes Mistress Granger."

Harry snickered at the indignant face Hermione had as she left. "So what's up, Bob?"

Bob sat back and looked at Harry. "I've located three of the cursed dark artifacts. And my preliminary tests all say this will work for what you're wanting."

"Were these preliminary tests legal? Or anything I want to know about?" Harry asked.

Bob shook his head. "Nope. Stick with ignorance and plausible deniability on this one."

"Oh dear," Harry groaned.

Bob waved him off. "Nothing like that. It was one of the braindead lifers, that the house elves are forced to feed because they act as

though they've been kissed. No one needs to know he's actually been kissed now."

Harry shook his head. "You're right. I don't want to know."

"Have I ever led you astray?" Bob asked.

Harry just gave Bob a look that said everything.

"Oh fine," Bob insisted. They continued in their small talk about positive uses for dark artifacts for twenty more minutes. With their business finished, Bob asked, "Can you make sure Hermione is alone before I materialize in her office?"

Harry nodded and closed his eyes for only a second. "There's no one else in there, and she's just sitting there waiting for you. Withholding knowledge from her is just about the meanest thing you can do."

"I'll keep that in mind," Bob grinned and waved. "Later Harry." He shifted into black mist and disappeared.

"Professor Granger," Bob greeted as he rematerialized in her office.

"Please call me Hermione," she greeted warmly. "Tea?"

Bob shook his head. "No thank you, Hermione. I just ate."

Hermione stopped and feared he kissed a student or ate puppies and kittens.

"That was a joke, Hermione." Bob grinned. "I just like the faces you made imagining what I must have eaten."

"Funny," Hermione smiled back uncertainly. "Now... knowledge? Please?"

Bob laughed. "Your reputation doesn't do you justice. And what was it you wanted to know?"

"Dementor Blood, time travel, how." Hermione answered concisely.

Bob nodded. "Do you know much about time travel?"

Hermione shrugged. "I'm familiar with time turners, but that's about it. My experience has indicated that timelines are fixed and unchangeable, but Harry tells me they're slightly more fluid than that but he won't tell me how."

"Okay," Bob explained. "But you understand how dangerous they can be, and why it's a magic only the Unspeakables have ever studied in depth."

"The Unspeakables have studied it?"

Bob shrunk down a bit. "Oops. I'm not sure I was supposed to tell you that."

"How would you even know that?"

Bob considered how much to tell her. "Well, the first time turner was the reason the Department of--"

Two third year girls hurried into the office since the door had been ajar awaiting Bob's entrance. "Professor Granger! Have you..."

"Oh my god!" The other screamed noticing the massive dementor reclining in the seat opposite her History of Magic Professor.

Bob waved weakly. "Err... hi. I'm... uh..." He looked at Hermione for help. But she just sat there with wide eyes and a closed mouth. Bob got up from his seat and said, "Right. Well... I think I'll just change out of my Dementor costume real fast."

Bob hurried over and went into one of Hermione's book closets and closed the door. About three seconds later out walked Hermione's boyfriend. "There we go. Much better." Nicholas kissed Hermione on the cheek. "Such an itchy robe with that costume. I'll catch you later sweetie."

Nicholas shook his finger at the two students he had taught as first years. "Just because it's December doesn't mean it's too early to start on your Halloween costume, Miss Morgan, Miss Douglas." And with a pleasant silence Nicholas quickly left the room.

The two girls looked at Nicholas oddly, and the stunned look on Hermione's face. "Professor Granger?"

"Oh," Hermione said with a shake of her head. "I'm sorry, Miss Morgan. What can I do for you?"

"We... well," the two girls exchanged a look. "We thought about what happened at lunch, and decided we wanted to help."

"Help?"

They nodded. "Yes Ma'am. Dobby told us to talk to you about Preventing Underprivileged Killer Elves?"

Miss Morgan nodded. "He said that our PUKE could be a subdivision of your SPEW."

Hermione sighed and wondered if she would ever live that damn acronym down.

Professor Potter and Professor Prongs walked into the Great Hall arguing. "Severus!" Professor Potter called out.

Professor Snape grumbled into his dinner and grunted back, "What?"

Harry smiled at Snape's irritation and sent him a burst of pleasure that made Snape grimace. "Professor Prongs here seems to think that you are even more gullible than he is. I keep defending your honor, but he has regaled quite a few instances of your youth that leave me with doubts."

Professor Snape frowned harshly. "I am not gullible. He is just cruel. And stupid."

“Hah!” James harrumphed. He turned and looked at all the students in the Hall on a Saturday. “I bet you can’t even tell me how many of these students are wandfers.”

Severus scowled harshly. “What’s a wandfer?”

Harry just sighed and dropped his head.

“For magic,” James smiled victoriously. “Dumb-ass.”

Harry just shook his head in disappointment while Severus weighed the benefits and drawbacks to casting an Avada Kedavra on Professor Prongs.

“Oh Severus,” Harry groaned. “I actually feel embarrassed for you.”

Severus just walked away mumbling, “10 points from Gryffindor, 10 points from Hufflepuff, 10 points from Gryffindor, 10 points from Hufflepuff...”

Harry smiled and made sure to add back the points. He turned to his dad. “Come on, let’s get Padfoot and Neville. We’ve got a lot of drinking and strippers to get through.”

“Yeah we do!”

“Padfoot,” George began.

Fred continued, “I’d like you to meet,”

“Padfoot,” they finished in unison.

Sirius grinned at the cute little Dalmatian as he went to pet his head.

“Hey little guy!”

“Hello!” The dog happily barked.

Sirius stopped his motion and just stood there in shock.

“Hello!” The dog barked again.

Sirius grinned brighter than any could remember him ever doing before. "Hello!" Sirius called back.

"Hello! Hello." The dog yipped and ran up to the human Padfoot.

"Hello, hello, hello," Sirius replied. "Hello English?"

"Hello hello hello hello. Hello!" The doggy answered back.

"No way!" Sirius said. "They did?"

"Hello hello!" The puppy insisted.

"Not even the healers could remove it?"

"Hello hello hello helo!"

"So what happened to the rest of the gerbil tunnels?"

"Hello! Hel-"

"Alright that's enough from you!" George insisted with wide eyes clamping his hand around the little puppy's mouth.

Fred looked at the traitorous little doggy. "We're going to be having a discussion later about your loose lips!"

"Hello hello hello!" The frightened little doggy yipped.

Sirius shook his head with a grin. "No, Padfoot. 'Lipstick' refers to something completely different. Just trust me."

George went to go lock their little puppy back up. "I think that's the last you're going to get to see of Uncle Padfoot."

"Hello!" Sirius called out bidding the adorable Dalmatian adieu.

Fred looked at Sirius oddly. "Did you really understand Padfoot?"

“Padfoot, eh?” Sirius asked with a smile. “Or do you mean your peanut butter loving Mrs. Tigger?”

“That’s enough!” Fred and George both blurted out interrupting Sirius. “Don’t we have a bachelor party to get to?”

“Yeah really,” Ron insisted. “We all know these two are perverts, but I don’t want to think about that while I’m sober.”

“Fair enough,” Harry agreed. “I’ve got us a portkey. Is this everyone Ron?”

Ron looked around. “I don’t see any naked bressesses.”

“Yes yes,” Harry rolled his eyes. “Those are on the way. I just meant the other people you may have invited?”

Ron’s eyes widened. “Invited? Err... was I supposed to?”

Harry looked at him oddly. “I only talked to your family and these miscreants. Did you not have anyone else?”

Ron shrugged. “I’m here for the bressesses.”

Harry looked around at Bill, Charlie, Fred, George, James, Sirius, Remus, and Neville. “Alright, works for me. Everyone gather round and we’re off.”

The motley group gathered around the massive feather boa. Harry grinned and activated the portkey, “Ronniekins.”

A long and tortuous portkey ride followed and all ten of them crashed on their arses on a giant twenty foot pillow. Neville began screaming in fright as he thought they were being eaten by the satiny pink softness. “Aaaaahhhh!”

Harry laughed. “Settle down, Nev. It was just a pillow to catch us when we fall.”

Neville calmed significantly, apparently flashbacks about returning to the womb now forgotten.

“Where are we?” Charlie asked as he struggled up.

Harry helped everyone up and they made their way out of the enclosed back room. “We’re in the only place you can ever have a proper bachelor party.”

Sirius gasped in realization. “We’re at the modern Mecca?”

Remus made an odd face. “Mecca?”

Harry knew his godfather and nodded. “We are at your Mecca, Padfoot. Yes, everyone, welcome to Vegas.”

Fred and George gasped as tears sprung to their eyes. “Our home away from home.”

“There’s bresses here, right Harry?” Ron verified.

Harry nodded. “Yes Ron. Lots of them. Jubblies as far as the eye can see.”

“Perfect.”

Harry explained, “I’ve reserved the VIP room for us here. We’re at the only magical casino wizards can legally gamble at in Vegas, the Drunken Niffler. I would recommend that you not stray from here, as your presence is not particularly welcome elsewhere on the strip. Whereas here, everyone is informed, if not magical themselves, and magic is used and utilized in much of the gaming. I know many of you might not have come prepared so you will be allowed an immediate tab of a few thousand galleons. Don’t bet it if you’re not willing to lose it. Fred and George, you two have your usual tab, as apparently Alejandro was delighted to hear the guest of honor’s last name and asked about you two immediately.”

“Great man, Alejandro,” Fred said gruffly.

George nodded. "Best friend a guy could have."

"As long as you don't mind having your ass pinched a few more times than is friendly." Fred agreed.

Harry nodded. "My ass shocks him when he goes for me a second time. I let the first one by as a courtesy."

James asked, "Err... you sure this is the right sort of place?"

Harry laughed and nodded as a tiny man who couldn't have been more than five feet tall came bursting into the room. "Harrrrrry!" he exclaimed joyously rolling the R way longer than was necessary. "So good to see you!"

He turned to the redhead with the goofiest grin there. "And you must be the man of the hour, Meester Weasley, no?"

"That's me," Ron grinned before yelping as his ass got pinched. "Careful there."

"He's tender," Fred called out.

Alejandro turned and greeted, "The terrible twosome, double trouble, it eez like taking a crap and holding a mirror up to it!"

George grinned at their always warm welcome. "Cheers Allie!"

Alejandro hopped over and shook their hands as well. "Now, you are all welcome to crash in a room, just ask for one at the desk. Thees back room eez yours to ward and make whatever demonic rituals Meester Potter has planned. Just inform the dealers on the gaming floor you are part of the Ronniekins party, and they will scan your wand eef you wish to try your luck at gambling."

Alejandro walked over towards the exit door, and snapped his fingers before shimmying at the waist. "And now I will leave you filthy leetle men to your show!" He clapped twice loudly and spun around a full one hundred eighty degrees prancing out of their private VIP room.

The lights all dimmed and stage grew up from the ground surrounding the group on all sides. A dozen scantily clad women all came out with see through camisoles and other practically sheer negligee. Under their arms, each one carried a bucket.

“Harry,” Ron dumbly asked entranced by the women circling around the group. “Is that what I think it is?”

Harry just chuckled.

The obvious leader of the group was over six feet tall and looked like a genetically engineered super woman created by the Germans. “Ronald Veasley!” She yelled looking straight down at the man.

Ron nodded and wiped the drool off the side of his mouth.

She rapidly descended into a squat directly in front of Ron’s eyes. The stretching and motions in the fabric inevitably drew Ron’s eyes to a particularly interesting central area. She insisted, “I vant to dance for you!”

Ron was whispering back, “And I vant you to as vell!”

“But before ve dance!” She ordered and presented him his bucket. “You must eat!”

Ron accepted his bucket of fried chicken as though it was the Holy Grail. “Okay.”

All the other girls presented their buckets to the other men in front of them. “You eat, you get rewarded.”

Neville’s stomach was grumbling, and so he paid little mind to the hot practically naked Scandinavian-looking girls in front of him. He pulled out a drumstick and groaned in pleasure at the delicious meal. He didn’t even notice the two girls in front of him beginning to make out.

Harry laughed as Neville turned and flashed him a thumbs up, apparently for a good dinner, as he was unaware a large pair of breasts was going to greet him when he turned back around. His

girlish scream when he smacked his face into the blonde was highly comical. Especially as he apologized and tried to rub the chicken grease off her chest.

Sirius on the other hand had his eyes firmly fixed on the girl in front of him. He kept staring at her, maintaining eye contact, grabbed a piece of chicken from his bucket, and stuck the whole thing in his mouth. Still never looking away, he shifted it back and forth twice in his mouth before pulling out a completely stripped singular chicken bone. The girl's eyes widened and she whistled. Her pet poodle came running out then, and it had on the same outfit as the dancer. Sirius tried to hide it, but Moony called him out for crying.

After that things took a turn to freaktown.

Harry slowly regained consciousness. He looked to his left and saw a peacefully sleeping naked woman. He looked to his right and saw two more peacefully sleeping naked women. He looked towards his lap and saw his dad asleep with his head drooling into Harry's lap. "Ahhh!"

If the screaming didn't wake James, the knee to his face probably would have. But the reflex of Inga, sleeping on Harry's left side, was to flail, and the forceful kick to James' relatively unprotected manhood brought him rapidly to awareness. He wasn't quite sure what happened, other than he woke up groaning in pain. "Stop screaming so loud!"

"No you stop screaming!"

"No you!"

Apparently there were at least four other men in the room, all of which were screaming for the others to stop screaming. When Harry saw the pouting look on Inga's face, he knew he should do something, so he cast a massive silencing spell, preventing everyone from speaking. He quietly announced, "That's better," and then rolled over back to sleep.

An hour or so later a cold bucket of water splashed on Harry quickly waking him. All the rest of the guys were angrily pointing at their

silenced mouths, while several girls now wearing hotel robes were visibly chuckling. Still the blissful silence remained while Harry just smiled at them.

Harry decided to be the nice host and removed the silencing charm. Every one of the girls there gave Harry a smooch on the cheek and maintained their silence as they then left the room. Nothing says professional like knowing when not to talk. Harry enjoyed the jealous looks from Bill, Charlie, Ron, James, Sirius, Remus, and Neville. "And how is everyone feeling now?"

"Better ever since Alejandro delivered the hangover potions," Ron admitted. "Though no one has seen nor heard from the twins. And why don't you have a hangover?"

Harry shrugged. "Good metabolism. And knowing Gred and Forge they're probably still gambling. I doubt they've even gone to bed."

"Dammit Harry!" James insisted. "You promised your mother I'd be home last night, though probably drunk!"

Bill was blushing a bit and nodded. "Yeah, you could have given us a heads up."

Sirius looked at Bill's blush. "What happened?"

Harry raised an eyebrow. "Yes Bill. What did happen?"

Bill rolled his eyes. "I tried to floo Fleur and apologize for not making it back when I had promised..."

Harry grinned as he put a shirt on. "Don't you trust me?"

"Yes yes fine, I trust you," Bill said. "I spent time writing out an apology and stuck my silenced head into a floo only to meet up with myself. The me on the other side slapped me and reminded me to trust Harry." Bill grumbled. "Don't know why he didn't remove the silencing charm on me though."

Harry grinned. "Well that's easy. It was because he already knew that he hadn't earlier."

Remus sighed. "Harry... you know time travel is illegal."

"We're time traveling?" James asked hopefully.

Harry nodded. "I figured we could gamble a bit this morning, go have a barbecue on the beach this afternoon, get drunk and return at the proper time last night."

"Sweet!" Ron agreed readily.

"Umm..." Neville interrupted. "Not that I mind breaking the law with you yet again Harry, I just have one question-"

"Before anyone else's panties get into a bunch," Harry said sarcastically.

"Will you stop looking at me?" Remus huffed.

"We won't be breaking the law time traveling anyways," Harry insisted. "It's only every major halfway organized nation that has laws against time travel. We're going to be going to my island for the barbecue and beach. And there I get to make the laws."

"Wow, okay," Neville agreed. "That's... damn you're lucky... but back to my one question, umm Harry, your mother?"

Pretty much everyone looked at Neville's shocked face and laughed.

"Oh crap, Nev!" Harry laughed. "You're too used to weird shit around me, that I never even realized you didn't know still. Let me make some way overdue proper introductions, Neville Longbottom, this is my father James Potter and my godfather Sirius Black."

Neville's eyes lit up in realization. "God that makes so much more sense. And Professor Bessie would be Lily Potter?"

Harry nodded.

“So I take it your island doesn’t have laws on necromancy either?”

Harry groaned and let his dad explain it to Neville.

They all had a light breakfast, located Fred and George who were up about eighteen thousand galleons, and gambled for a few hours. Most people just bet the same things that Harry did on the roulette wheel and craps tables. Everyone ended up winning at least a few hundred galleons, except for Remus who tried his hand on the poker tables and lost a thousand galleons before Padfoot pulled him away. Fred and George very reluctantly said goodbye to their good luck charms that truthfully didn’t look old enough to be in the casino, and the group of ten men went back into the VIP room. Once again, Harry had everyone grab hold of the long feather boa and he activated the portkey.

The group reappeared in a completely white room. White walls, white floor, white ceiling and it seemed like all six walls were the light source.

“Alright, just a moment,” Harry instructed while waving his wand in a complicated motion. “If you want to see something cool you can look at your watches.” Those that did saw as time around them rewind rapidly, and in about five seconds they had gone back a day. “There we go,” Harry announced as he pushed on the middle of one of the blank white walls and it opened into a doorway.

He led them all up a long flight of stairs and explained, “We should be leaving for our bachelor party in about four hours, so I figure we should kill eight hours around here and arrive home mildly drunk, to please those of us who fear our better halves.”

The majority of them all single guys laughed at James and Bill’s blushes. Ron was laughing too until it was painfully pointed out that he was in their group too now.

Dobby showed up and happily provided all the sides and other tasty treats, while leaving the men to turn the meat on the fire. After all they were manly men. Grilling was their birthright.

A heavy dose of male bonding filled with beers, pick-up games of Quidditch, and some limited swimming followed and they all finished off their meal with their own bottles of firewhiskey to nurse around a bonfire.

“Swear to Merlin,” Sirius boasted. “The hooker thanked me and gave me my money back.”

“Right,” James sarcastically agreed.

“With tip,” Sirius added.

Remus just chuckled. “Alright Harry. I’m dying to know now. How the hell did you get your own island independent of any government?”

Harry smiled wistfully and honestly answered. “Believe it or not, a friend left it to me.”

“Who?” Charlie asked curiously.

“Wesley,” Harry replied. “I doubt you guys would know him. He was pretty old and actually died here.” Harry pointed towards an overgrowth of wild magical flowers. “Buried him over there.”

Remus detected the slightly somber mood shift and asked, “How’d you meet Wesley?”

Harry’s eyes twinkled and explained, “It was actually Nicholas who introduced us. He’d known Nicholas for over a century.”

James’ raised an eyebrow. “And he left this island to you? Not Nicholas?”

Harry nodded. “Yup. Wesley was truly brilliant. He’s the one who built that time chamber we portkeyed into. He taught me probably more than anyone else has.” A comfortable silence fell across everyone as they could tell this Wesley person meant quite a bit to Harry.

“Alright, alright,” Sirius jolly tone started up. “As long as we’re opening up with the honesty and such, Prongsy old boy, there is something you have got to tell me.”

James raised a curious eye.

Sirius smirked at Remus. “You would never tell us what you changed the password to your trunk to for seventh year, and none of us could ever guess.”

James’ eyes widened and he subtly glanced at Neville.

Remus’ eyes lit up. “That’s right! I almost got you to tell me that one time you jinxed off your arms, but then you suddenly refused to!”

Sirius nodded. “Yup. He was willing to share the trunk with us, but there was something embarrassing about what the password was... so,” Sirius grinned wickedly. “Out with it, already. What was the password?”

James shook his head. “No way Padfoot!”

“Oh come on,” Harry begged. “Secrets on this island stay on this island. You’re among friends here.”

James maintained his silence.

Padfoot insisted. “We’ve all had to be honest about our most embarrassing experiences... give us this one, and you won’t even have to do that.”

“Now hold on,” Bill insisted. “I just told you guys I wet the bed when I lost my virginity! I want to hear his most embarrassing experience!”

Sirius waved him off, “I’m sure me and Moony can probably figure that one out for you. But I want this password.”

“Fine... fine...” James gave up. “But this doesn’t leave this island!”

“Yes, yes, yes,” The Weasley twins said with shakes of their head. “Spill.”

“If Lils ever finds out, I’m dead but...” James hesitated and finally finished. “The password was I made out with Longbottom.”

Neville gasped.

While Sirius’ eyebrows rose. “You made out with Alice?”

James turned to Padfoot trying to hide his surprise and nodded. “Yes. Yes I did.”

“Hold on a second,” Remus interrupted. “Frank and Alice didn’t get married until after we graduated. The only Longbottom was... oh.” A surprised Remus paused and added. “Ohhh.”

James turned beet red and refused to meet anyone’s eyes.

Sirius jumped up with a wild grin on his face. “You made out with Longbottom! Oh Merlin!”

Ron, who had been enjoying his firewhiskey greatly, chuckled out, “I know what that’s like.”

Neville’s eyes widened and he eeped out loud.

“Did I say that out loud?” An extremely frightened looking Ron asked, adamantly refusing to look at the incredibly pale Neville Longbottom sitting next to him.

Everyone else, even James, was laughing their heads off at him. Harry assured him, “Yep.”

“Oh god,” Ron moaned, while Neville seemed to want to run into the ocean and never come back. “Harry... help.”

No one was all that surprised when Ron caught a stunner in the face, while everyone else continued to laugh merrily.

CHAPTER EIGHTEEN

“You know I’m not gay, right Harry?”

“Sure Nev.”

“Not that there’s anything wrong with that.”

“Not a thing.”

“Being young and gullible and picturing a dude’s sister... I mean that’s not gay, right?”

“Course not.”

“Innocent youthful curiosity.”

“Exactly.”

“I mean it’s like anchovies. Just because everyone tells you that you won’t like them, you never know for sure until you try them, right?”

“Right.”

“Could’ve happened to anyone.”

“Anyone at all.”

“Even you?”

“Well,” Harry scoffed with more than a touch of disbelief, “if I were gay, maybe.”

Neville sighed.

“But I think I could do better than Ron.”

Neville just looked at Harry oddly.

“Not that you have bad taste in men, he’s just not my type.”

Neville opened his mouth to defend himself then thought perhaps he shouldn’t.

“Maybe Oliver Wood,” Harry pondered. “He’s got that fierce intensity and those smoldering eyes.”

Neville almost pointed out that Oliver’s eyebrows were scary thick, but restrained himself. That would sound like he was paying a little too much attention. After an awkward pause Neville just concurred. “Err... right.”

“Besides Nev,” Harry helpfully added. “It’s another thing you have in common with your dad.”

“Aww crap,” Neville remembered. “I forgot my dad is gay.”

Albus Dumbledore looked at the Ministry representative he intercepted at the gates and was now officially interrogating, although stalling might be the more unofficially apt term. The two aurors escorting him were standing behind the bureaucrat, waiting vigilantly. Augustus Hollings was an old-fashioned pureblood wizard. He was Deputy Head of the Department of Magical Regulation. It was a department that’s primary purposes seemed to be ensuring pureblood practices, and to essentially resist change in all forms, clinging to tradition with all the might old money can support. The man was well-known to be discriminatory towards muggle-borns and halfbloods but he was a non-violent man. He had been outspoken against the Dark Lord and Death Eaters, condemning their actions but supporting their general philosophy. Albus wondered if the man had ever even met a muggle. “As Chief Warlock of the Wizengamot, as well as headmaster for this institution, I should be informed any time you bring aurors with you and intend to arrest members of my faculty on my watch.”

Hollings frowned. “You know as well as I that you would warn and help Mr. Potter in any way you could. This is in direct conflict with our investigation.”

Albus insisted, "If I found your line of inquiry worthy I would be doing everything in my power to assist you, but you come here with only baseless rumors. I will not allow you to disrupt my school, harass my faculty, and do your best to publicly humiliate the instructors here."

"These are very serious accusations! He must at least come in for questioning immediately."

"If you had sent Mr. Potter a letter and invited him to the Ministry, I'm quite sure he'd be willing to comply with any polite request."

"You won't even tell us the full names of the members of your staff! Padfoot? Prongs? Bessie? Do they even have a first name? Or last name?"

Albus sighed and took off his glasses to clean them. "Augustus," Albus sighed. "I can understand how you may not like to see your beliefs about magic and its nature being forced to change and adapt but you must maintain your dignity. And think about what you are claiming and exactly who you are accusing."

"Harry Potter is a just a wizard like any other." Hollings insisted.

Albus sat back and smiled. "Really? Like any other?"

"He must observe and follow all the same laws the rest of us do."

Albus grinned. "That's an interesting line of thought. You have always insisted that the parents of muggle-borns should have no legal say in the magical world. You've even gone so far as to restrict the rights of squibs. It sounds like you're defining the value of a person's voice on their magical power."

"Wizards of noble descent have always had the most exposure and understanding of the magical world. It should fall to us to govern ourselves."

Albus nodded. "In the muggle world, most democracies believe in one person, one vote, for everyone regardless of strength or ancestry. But without magic, the strength of men cannot be defined as clearly as

something like magical power. I've always been given a fair amount of leeway because of the respect my power commands. Do you really wish to antagonize Mr. Potter?"

Hollings frowned. "It is those who are capable of the most that must be most closely monitored. If Mr. Potter has been practicing necromancy, he will be sent to Azkaban. The law is clear on that."

Albus shrugged. "What good would that do?"

"What?"

"I'm asking what volunteering him for a vacation will accomplish other than directing his ire towards you."

"I hardly think prison would be considered a vacation."

Albus was rubbing his chin in thought. "Even if the dementors didn't already respect him as a friend, I assure you that you do not have any prison capable of holding him, if he wishes to escape. Frankly I'm a little curious if he would even need wizard magic to free himself from any attempts at holding him. If you truly believe that it is magic that makes one's opinion count then I assure you, we're all here to adapt to Mr. Potter."

"There's no doubt Harry Potter is powerful," Hollings argued despite a little uncertainty creeping into his voice. "But that does not give him the freedom to break the law on a whim."

Albus shrugged. "I'm quite sure he never knowingly or intentionally broke any laws, but honestly... how many ants does it take to order around and govern an elephant?"

Hollings looked at Albus oddly. "Sometimes I wonder if you're losing it, Albus."

Albus smiled. "I happen to think it is the ants that should be adapting to the elephant." He tilted a candy dish towards Augustus. "Hot tamale?"

"No," Augustus snapped back. "I don't want..." He trailed off as Harry Potter began to grow out of the stone floor directly in between Deputy Head Hollings and the Headmaster.

Harry looked over his shoulder at the Headmaster. "Thanks, Albus. Don't mind if I do."

The two aurors' eyes widened and their bodies obviously tensed.

Harry smiled at them. "Relax boys. Your wands are portkeys back to Auror Headquarters if you want. Just say 'Thanks, Harry' and you'll be back at the office in no time. I'll make sure Deputy Head Hollings gets his answers and makes it back safely."

The two aurors glanced at each other and smiled. "Thanks, Harry." As they both disappeared, one of them was shrugging and saying "Oops."

Augustus Hollings' eyes widened and he was getting visibly nervous.

Albus just sat back amused.

Harry crossed his arms and looked sternly at the older bureaucrat. "Now Deputy Head Hollings, I'm going to humor your ill conceived inquiry just so that you will leave me alone in the future."

"Th- thank you, Mr. Potter," he stuttered nervously in response. "There have been some reports-"

"I'm well aware of the erroneous information you are following up on," Harry interrupted demonstrating just how little he thought of this man. "Now I know you have been working in the Ministry through both rises of Voldemort." Harry took pleasure in the shudders that only the older people still made when they heard that name. "Are you familiar with the standard auror pre-interrogation identification charms? Specifically those to detect Polyjuice?"

Hollings looked confused. "Umm... yes, I am."

“Excellent,” Harry grinned. “Because as you know, I am heavily involved in a research project, of which most details are still protected under Merlin’s Laws of Discovery. I will happily share with you one of the stable and already privately disclosed capabilities. That is to make a Polyjuice transformation permanent and only counterable by the inverse potion. Polyjuice potion is controlled substance, but I have authorization for this usage, as anyone within the Department of Mysteries can attest to.”

Hollings’ eyes widened as he was unaware of this Ministry approval.

“Now you seem to be under the mistaken impression,” Harry explained. “That simply because three people strongly resembling my father, mother, and godfather are suddenly out and about that I have been tinkering in necromancy. A very dangerous assumption to make, I assure you.”

Hollings got the feeling his investigation was not going to be lasting much longer.

Harry sat back on the edge of the Headmaster’s desk and just stared defiantly at Augustus Hollings. “I’m going assume your opinions of blood purity have absolutely nothing to do with this. I’m also going to assume you are not here on some crusade to try and publicly dirty my name. For that reason, I’m willfully divulging the fact that I have had three research partners or experiments if you will, under permanent Polyjuice. This was to perform a long term test on the Polyjuice yet again, before publicly announcing it and making it available to reputable sources and Ministry regulation. And this was also to keep secret the identities of my research partners. While I could have chosen clones of myself or other people, or even any of the many wonderful muggles out there, I elected that the deceased made the most sense and chose people close to me.”

“Oh...” Hollings said meekly. “I... I did not know that.”

“Of course you didn’t,” Harry agreed with a nod. “As secrecy on a research project of this magnitude is a necessity. Had you made any effort to contact me or inquire about this, I would have determined whether or not this information would be best kept from you or not.

Instead you came up with wild theories, asked around until you felt justified and decided to storm in here to make an arrest. Now..." Harry slowed his speech and his eyes glinted dangerously. "Why don't we just get this over with quickly, so you can get on with the rest of your day?"

Hollings gulped.

"What's up Harry?" a voice asked from directly behind Augustus Hollings, startling him from his seat.

"Oh..." Sirius sighed and helped himself to a chair. "Another one of these."

"More bureaucrap?" Lily asked, making no inflection on her pronunciation, leaving Deputy Head Hollings wondering if his ears were deceiving him. She continued. "Haven't we done enough of these?"

The first voice, now identified as James, tiredly asked, "Who is it this time? War Mage Advisory Council again?"

"As long as it's not the Ancients," Padfoot insisted. "Those bloody relics are so boring."

Lily nodded. "Even the muggles' inquiry didn't take that long."

James agreed. "I thought the Elemental Masters were fun. Best chairs of the bunch."

Sirius nodded. "The Elder Elves had the best food though. Hands down."

Hollings just kept snapping his head back and forth in confusion, having only ever heard of these groups in legend, though appalled to here about a muggle inquiry.

"No no," Harry smiled and explained. "It seems the lovely wizards of Britian and the Ministry around here has finally found the time to intervene. And while I'm sure they could prepare us an adequate

buffet if you felt like heading down to the Ministry, I figured we could just get this over with quickly.”

Hollings jumped in. “Mr. Potter, what are you talking about? War Mages, Ancients, Elementals, Elves? And muggles?”

Harry nodded. “Of course. You wouldn’t think the muggles would let something this landmark pass them by without determining our intent or providing assistance where they could? They convened a CDM within three hours of their intelligence network picking up notification. After the Privet Drive incident they kindly requested a second CDM.”

“Harry,” Lily scolded playfully.

“Oops,” Harry shrugged. “I may have just broken the Statute of Secrecy on Muggle Intelligence to an uninformed wizard. Somehow I don’t think he’ll need to be phaser-beam mind-wiped though, will you Deputy Head Hollings?”

“What?”

“See,” Harry said looking at his mother. “He doesn’t even believe it when he hears it. Most wizards will happily believe what they want to. No need for mind-wiping at all.”

“What are you talking about?”

James nodded and waved his hand slowly in front of him. “Nothing at all Augustus. Wizards are superior and secret... as always.” James finished by wagging his fingers to really drive the subtle suggestion home.

“Now,” Sirius asked. “What do you need to know before we can get back to work?”

“Umm...” Augustus seemed a little lost.

Harry jumped in and suggested, “Perhaps you should test them for Polyjuice? And if you’d like we can sit here and wait for an hour to demonstrate that it isn’t a normal Polyjuice? Will that be sufficient?”

"Oh... right," Hollings nodded. "If you will all hold still..." Augustus waved his wand loudly incanting, "Probatur prabeo!" All three Assistant Professors responded to the spell with the dirty green colored haze indicating a Polyjuice potion.

"Surprise," Sirius lackadaisically said. He turned to his godson. "Why are you even making us go through this, Harry?"

"Yeah really," James added. "It's not like the Ministry of Magic has any jurisdiction over you."

Harry shrugged. "It makes them feel important. Gives them something to do."

Lily nodded. "And it should make things easier in the future."

"Kind of like those wheels you give to hamsters?" Sirius asked looking at some of the trinkets on Albus' shelves. He turned back to Harry. "So they don't just sit around and get fat?"

Hollings was getting angrier and angrier just listening to these people talk. He blustered, "I will not sit here and listen to you insult and berate the Ministry of Magic!"

"You could stand," James suggested.

"What?"

"Then you wouldn't be sitting here."

Augustus grumbled quietly.

Albus finally reminding everyone of his presence suggested, "If you would prefer Augustus, I do have a giant wheel in that closet you could spin for the next hour while we wait. It might help with those love handles."

Harry shook his head. "His abs and glutes we need to work on first. The love handles will take care of themselves."

Lily was tapping her chin. "Cutting out all the meat from your diet would be a great first step." She nodded and smiled. "The cows would certainly thank you for it."

James nodded. "I've got this moisturizer made from manticore sperm. Wrinkles disappear before your eyes and it exfoliates those pores like nothing you've ever seen. It's far better than pearl cream."

Sirius nodded staring at the Hollings' head. "Your T-zone definitely could use some help. Hell your whole forehead is practically turning purple right now."

"If we're making him over into a proper looking wizard," Lily suggested. "We have got to do something about those robes. They look centuries old."

"They are centuries old!" Hollings yelled back. "These have been passed down in my family for over a dozen generations."

Harry looked surprised. He leaned forward and quietly offered, "If you need to borrow some money to get new robes, I'm sure I could recommend a good loan officer. Logjam practically runs that department and he's an old friend of mine."

"I don't need money," Hollings was getting more and more upset. "I choose to wear these robes of my ancestors because they are the most proper and best looking."

Albus jumped in. "I know a number of good eye healers. They could fix your vision problems with a custom potion."

Hollings snarled. "I don't need-"

"I used to be like you," Harry interrupted with a sad shake of his head. "Angry at everything and everyone. Then I met a muggle psychotherapist. He helped me through many of my issues."

Hollings' jaw just dropped at the audacity of Harry.

“He could certainly help you at least deal with your purpling problem.”

“I don’t have a purpling-”

“You’re turning purple right now!” Sirius insisted.

Lily shook her head. “Denial is the first obstacle to overcome.”

“How can you hope to help anyone else,” James paused to make a show of frowning, “if you can’t help yourself?”

Augustus Hollings jumped up. “Fine, Mr. Potter. You’ve answered the questions and have the stupidest, most annoying secret research partners. I’m through here.” He angrily stormed away.

Harry called out, “Would you like me to escort you back?”

An irritated voice replied, “Not a chance in hell!”

“What the hell am I doing Harry?” The extremely frightened but smartly dressed groom asked. “I’m too bloody young! Hell, she’s way too bloody young! We’ve got our whole lives ahead of ourselves!”

Harry just smiled. “You love her, right?”

“Yeah, of course,” Ron said. “But that hardly seems like enough.”

“It’s the most important part.”

“I know that,” Ron whined. “But it’s just... one woman... for the rest of my life, you know?”

Harry could certainly sympathize with that fear. “Hmm. Well if you call it off, you mind if I ask her out?”

“Fuck you!” Ron snapped immediately.

Harry laughed. “I’m just kidding, mate. Besides... think of it this way, you ever slept with a married woman before?”

Ron smiled at that thought. “No. I can’t say that I have. Have you?”

"They're far and away the freakiest," Harry assured him without actually answering the question. "And this way, you can sleep with a real hot one tonight."

Ron brightened at the possibilities. "Thanks Harry."

"You're welcome," Harry assured him. "Don't think of it as sacrificing your individuality, your identity, relinquishing control of your testicles, and basically giving up being a man. Instead think of it as taking all the fun away from her keeping you whipped."

Ron rolled his eyes. "Yeah yeah yeah. Laugh it up. You could be heading down this road soon too."

"I'm not so sure about that," Harry argued. "I figure I'm a long ways off from the ball and chain shackling. Freedom suits me and I still got some growing up to do."

"Well I do too!" Ron whined petulantly.

Harry shook his head. "Naw, not exactly. A big part of it is discovering just who it is that's going to be growing up with you. Today's another big part of it. Today we celebrate the death of Ronald Weasley, swinging superstud free to secretly snog Neville anytime he wants, and in his place we celebrate the birth of Mrs. Ronald Chang, kept man."

Ron grinned. "It is pretty nice to be getting married because I want to. I always figured the time would be right because she's due soon."

"I think a lot of us figured that as well." Harry nodded. "And for what it's worth, I doubt you'd survive telling your Mum you called this off anyway."

Ron's eyes widened and he gulped. "Right. Let's do this."

Ron was standing up the altar, pretty much wearing that deer in headlights look permanently plastered on his face, waiting for his bride to be to walk down the aisle. Harry kept swatting at Ron every

time he started fidgeting entertaining thoughts of fleeing. The previously agreed upon muffling charm was around Mrs. Weasley's seat, though she seemed to be fighting the urge to run up and hug someone.

The bridal party came down the aisle at their musical queue decked out in ruffles and puffs that wouldn't look out of place on Ron's old dress robes. The Maid of Honor, Cho, was easily recognizable by the bright wide smile on her face, and steady trickling stream from her eye dribbling off her chin. Ginny was following dutifully and flashed her brother and Harry a warm smile.

Ron's youngest cousin Jon brought the rings, as he and the adorable little flower girl hurried their way up to the front. The music changed signifying the final two people who were going to be coming up to the altar.

Michelle Chang and her father appeared at the back of the hall, and Ron's unintentional charm was shining through. Without thinking he blurted out, "Good God, that's hot."

Harry had to pat Charlie on the back to help him stifle his coughing laughter, while Ron didn't seem to notice that he had spoken aloud.

Mr. Chang reluctantly dropped his daughter off at the front, and Albus, presiding over the ceremonies, began. "Welcome friends and family members on this glorious day. We are here to bear witness to the union of two kindred spirits, two gentle souls, two large and wonderful families." Harry once again had to pat Charlie on the back at the Headmaster's gift for understatement.

The ceremony continued on in a typically stuffy and overly archaic fashion. Ron rarely tore his eyes away from his bride, and merely responded as he had memorized, thanks in large parts to Harry's telepathic reminders and nudges. The first major deviation from tradition was when the happy couple turned to each other and gave their own personal vows.

"Michelle," Ron began looking her in the eye with the most honest face he could muster. "I may not be the smartest man. I may not be

the most beautiful man. I may not be the kindest man. I may not be the most understanding man. I may not be the best cook. I may not..." He struggled with this one. "I may... not even be the best Quidditch player. I may not make the best husband. I may not make the best father. I may not be the best at remembering things. I may not... I may..." Ron turned to Harry and frantically whispered, "What the hell am I saying?"

Harry shrugged uncertainly. "No idea."

Ron turned back and smiled at his bride. He fell back on the most important lesson Hermione had drilled into his head. When all else fails and you're out of options, you might as well try the truth. "Shit babe, I love you."

Michelle's face split into an ecstatic smile. One look at how retarded for each other these two were, particularly in the face of Ron's ad-libbed conclusion to his vows, was all everyone present needed to know these two were a perfect match.

Michelle squeezed Ron's hand and looked into his eyes. "Ron, I love you too. I want you to always remember this." She took her right hand and placed it over her heart. With all the conviction and honesty of a magical oath, she announced, "Rub a dub dub, thanks for the grub. Yay Ron."

Harry managed to hold back a snort, and thankfully Bill had silenced Charlie before he could make a scene. Harry looked over at his best friend. Ron's bottom lip was quivering as his eyes welled up. Finally, Ron surrendered the fight and hurriedly wiped his eyes. "Gets me every time."

Albus just looked at the raw emotion these words managed to stir up in confusion. After giving the happy couple a few moments to compose themselves, he turned to Jon. "Did you bring the rings?"

Cheeky little boy replied, "You think I can't 'member all one of the things I'm 'posed to?"

Albus startled before adopting an ashamed small smile. "I'm... I'm sorry. I didn't mean to imply anything."

"S'right old man," Jon pouted.

Albus slammed Harry a cold stare.

Harry refused to meet his eyes. He coughed lightly and asked Jon, "The rings?"

Jon lifted the pillow he'd been stuck holding a lot longer than he wanted. After putting the rings on each other's fingers, lighting a candle together, and some other uninteresting promises, Ron and Michelle reached the moment they had been waiting for.

Albus smiled at their excited impatience. "Ronald, Michelle. I now pronounce you husband and wife." Albus' eyes twinkled joyfully. "You may kiss the bride."

Ron nodded his head in acceptance of the offer and scooped up his wife. They embraced in a kiss that was beyond the limits of good taste. Harry had to look away when Ron started pawing Michelle's ass.

Albus paid no mind to all the over the clothes groping going on in front of him. "Ladies and Gentlemen, may I proudly present Mr. and Mrs. Ronald and Michelle Weasley."

Arthur just barely got off a stunner on his wife when she broke free of the muffled area. Everyone else was cheering and applauding the lip-locked newlyweds.

Several minutes later the continuous cheers began to die down and still neither Ron nor Michelle had come up for air. Harry gently stepped forward and tapped Ron on the shoulder. "Ron!" He whispered loudly.

"Jusstakecarmmbblmumph," Michelle mumbled from inside her and Ron's sealed mouths.

Harry cleared his throat a little louder.

Ron turned his head when Michelle began to lick up the side of his face. "Just take care of it, Harry!"

Harry rolled his eyes while the crowd laughed at the graphic and inappropriate show being put on. Harry waved his hand and levitated the latest Weasley baby factory a couple feet off the ground. He walked them back down the aisle slowly waving to the crowds as he went. Showers of rice were thrown, with surprisingly no response from Ron on the indecent use of food. As the smooching pair were loaded into the back seat of the patiently waiting wild Ford Anglia, Harry cast a slight obfuscation charm on the windows. He went to the front of the car, patted it on the hood, and tickled it under the hood ornament. "Go ahead and take the long way for them. Swing on by and say 'Hi' to Aragog if you like."

The Ford responded with two affirmative honks and drove off in the distance while two sweaty hands slapped up against the fogged windows of the backseat.

"Open bar! Thanks be to Potter!" Tonks exclaimed arriving at the reception. Tonks had downed two shots before Ginny and Luna joined her.

"Doing okay there, Tonks?" Ginny asked with a smile.

Tonks got herself a nice double scotch neat and decided to just nurse that for a while. "Yeah. Beautiful ceremony, wasn't it?"

Ginny nodded and took a swig from her daiquiri. "It certainly had all the characteristics of a Weasley wedding. Though their vows were definitely... unique."

Luna nodded. "I especially enjoyed watching Ron's tongue go on that dig for gold in the back of Michelle's throat." Luna helped herself to a shot of water, and then chased it with a large glass of whiskey.

Tonks shrugged. "It's hard not to wonder if it'll ever be you up at the altar getting married at these things, you know? A reminder that I could do without, thank you very much."

Ginny had a half-smile. "Makes you wonder if you'll ever meet the right guy?"

Tonks grumbled into her scotch. "Maybe I have met the right guy. He's just too dense to realize it."

Ginny's eyes narrowed dangerously, while Luna sat back serenely. Ginny faked a smile. "Oh really, Tonks? You think you found the one? Has Harry met this mystery man yet?"

Tonks frowned and looked over at Ginny. "How are you so sure Harry's not the one for me?"

Ginny scoffed. "Oh honestly, Tonks. I'm a Weasley. We're practically his family. You and I both know that Harry and I getting together in the end is inevitable. He's just got to work his way through this wild streak."

"Right," Tonks forced a smile. "Goodness knows all the times we've slept together he's always talking about how much he wishes I had no breasts. And how he wants to raise a whole farm full of pale freckled freakish looking ginger kids."

"Really?" Ginny snarled. "That's funny. Every time he's on his knees between my legs, he's always so glad that I actually have my own constant face, and that I don't have to use magic to hide my cottage cheese thighs."

Tonks was about to snap back irritably, when Luna threw out. "That's odd. With me he's always just telling me that he loves me and asking my opinion on love and the future." Luna was calmly sipping her whiskey. "Maybe I should try and get him to not be so open. I'm missing out on some hollow gossip."

"What?" Ginny snarled.

"He's told you he loves you?" Tonks asked incredulously.

Luna looked at the others and nodded with a small smile. "Certainly. Lots of times. Sometimes he just wants to be naked and snuggle. Considering all the sex he must be having with you, I'm not surprised."

Ginny and Tonks just stared at the blonde with their mouths agape.

"Oh look, Ron and Michelle are here." Luna stated as she walked over towards her assigned table. Ginny and Tonks narrowed their eyes at each other and found they were at the same table as Luna.

Ron strolled right up to Harry and swung a punch right at the face. Harry smiled having seen it coming and subtly shifted some of the tissue just underneath the skin into stone. Ron's hand connected with a loud crack, while Harry didn't even budge from his spot.

"God dammit, Harry!" Ron insisted cradling his hurt hand while Michelle just laughed at her husband. "That wasn't funny."

Harry was smiling brightly. "What did I do?"

Ron was rubbing some feeling into his hand, which Harry numbed and healed for him. "I was making out with a married woman for the first time and had to stop because of all the clicking going on. Nearly pissed myself."

"But you didn't sweetie," Michelle assured him. "You were very brave."

Harry laughed.

"Stupid old thing called me 'Friend of Harry' and then spewed his juice on us!"

Michelle was calming her husband. "He was blessing us with some of the finest acromantula silk I've ever seen. You should be thankful."

"See?" Harry said pointing to Michelle. "Today's the birth of a new Ron Weasley. Only the old one had to fear gigantic, man-eating,

flesh-devouring spiders. This new one could happily visit Aragog any time you're up for some chat."

Ron just grumbled and sat down at the head table with his wife and their parents. Ron smirked viciously, "Go sit at your own table."

Harry didn't like that look and noticed a nearby empty seat with his name card in front of it. Sitting around the table, with extremely angry tense faces were Hermione, Tonks, and Ginny. Luna was there too, but tense was never a word to describe her. Smiling happily interspersed among them all were Remus, Sirius, James, and Lily. Harry gulped and nervously sat down in between Ginny and Tonks, while Luna smiled brightly at him. "Hello everyone. Wonderful weather we're having, isn't it?"

CHAPTER NINETEEN

“Harry!” Tonks snapped, startling her cousin sitting next to her.

“So you love Luna,” Ginny spat out glaring at Harry.

Harry looked at Luna and smiled. “Yup, I do. Just as much as I love you.”

“Well why didn’t you...” Ginny stopped short and let out a little gasp. “You love me?”

Harry nodded and turned towards Tonks’ confused face. “And you, Tonky. And if it weren’t for Nicholas, I’d probably love Hermy the same way.”

The sour look on Hermione’s face twitched just a little.

Ginny frowned. “Well why didn’t you...I mean...”

“How can you love all of us?” Tonks asked sounding half-elated and half-confused. “That doesn’t sound like love.”

Hermione huffed like a spoiled child. “And why did you tell Luna first? What makes her so special?”

Remus just looked at Hermione curiously. He saw the hurt clear as day on her face, and he knew it wasn’t simply because Nicholas was noticeably absent at the moment.

Harry shrugged. “I just do. I wasn’t trying to keep it secret from any of you.”

Luna smiled happily. “I could’ve told you all that Harry loved you, if you’d wanted. He’s told me that he loves you enough times.”

“What?” Ginny asked more than a little irritated to hear Luna knew this before she did.

Harry winced and saw how amused his parents and godfather were. "As for Luna... it's just... I mean..." Harry was struggling and wondering where the hell Nicholas was.

"I think Harry wasn't sure you'd understand," Luna suggested to all the irritated girls. "He didn't want you to think that loving you meant he didn't love anyone else. Or put you in danger of Love-sucking Lartwicks."

Harry nodded at the explanation. "It was the Lartwicks mainly."

Sirius was grinning and felt like fueling the fire. "Harry, you've been casually dating these girls for well over a year."

"Well over a year and a half," Tonks helpfully added.

"A year and a half," James said with a shake of his head. "Why the hell haven't they dumped you yet?"

Lily nodded with a mischievous grin. "Honestly Harry, don't you think it's about time to make a decision?"

"Yeah," Ginny agreed.

"Or are you planning on stringing them all on forever?" Lily asked with a smile.

Harry just stared at his Mum wondering if it was time to separate her soul from that body. He looked around the table and saw Hermione, Ginny, and Tonks all looking at him expectantly. James, Sirius, and Lily looked like they were enjoying this way too much. Remus was alternating between smiling at Harry's discomfort, and watching Hermione inquisitively. Luna was just sitting back enjoying her drink, and unabashedly playing with her right boob.

"What do you want from me?" Harry pleaded desperately hoping Nicholas would show up soon. "What do you expect me to say?"

Lily answered. "I just think it isn't fair to these girls that you've been stringing them all on for this long. I think you should pick one and take that relationship to the next level."

"The next level? But I've done anal with all of them," Harry said scratching his head.

"You said no one else let you!" Tonks and Ginny yelled back in unison before staring angrily at each other. Hermione was rapidly reddening as well, while Luna seemed to be checking out Ginny's ass.

Lily was biting her lip and dropped her head to keep from laughing. "That wasn't quite what I was saying. I meant an exclusive serious relationship. To see if you connect on more than simply a physical level."

"But I love all of them?" Harry said confusedly. "Don't I?"

"You cannot possibly love everyone equally," Hermione insisted giving Harry a knowing stare. "I'm sure you're closer with some more than others. Perhaps you confide and trust them with more of your secrets."

Harry pursed his lips in thought. "If I know more about any of you than the others, which I'm not so sure I do, then it means I know more bad things about you too. Or know more little habits that annoy me."

"What the hell do I do that annoys you?" Tonks demanded.

"Besides yelling and swearing at me right now?" Harry retorted.

"You like that!" Tonks insisted with a smile.

Harry snickered. "Okay maybe I do. And come on guys, I don't really want to get into this right now. It's Ron's wedding day, we should be celebrating."

Tonks frowned. "You're stalling and stringing us along again."

Ginny sighed and fluttered her eyes at Harry in the way she knew he liked. "If you can't decide that you want to be with me, Harry, then I'm not sure I want to be with you."

"Me neither," Tonks agreed firmly.

"Personally," Lily suggested. "I think you should make a decision. And for what it's worth, you and Luna look very cute together."

Luna smiled at Lily. "Thank you Bessie. I think you and Harry look very cute together too."

Lily sat back not sure how to respond to that. "Thanks... I think."

Sirius looked at his cousin's frown. "Well that's a silly reason to choose Luna. Tonks can look like anyone including Luna, so she will always be cute with him."

"Well so can Harry," Lily pointed out.

"All the more reason for Tonks to understand what that's like and means," Sirius argued.

James shook his head. "You're all just searching for logic, when history tells you everything you need to know. Potter men are notoriously retarded for redheads. Ginny's the clear choice."

"Tonks is," Sirius insisted.

"Ginny," James said back.

"Luna," Lily argued.

"Ginny!"

"Luna!"

"Tonks!"

"Ginny!"

“Remus?” Lily asked.

“Eww,” James and Sirius moaned in return. James paused and added, “No offense, Moony.”

“I was asking his opinion, you numbnuts.” Lily explained.

Remus looked a bit uncertainly at Harry’s frustration and all the other girls waiting faces. “Well, with all due respect to Nicholas, I think Hermione and Harry have some issues to work out first.”

Hermione nodded fervently before realizing how that looked.

Harry complained loudly, “Where the bloody hell is Nicholas anyway?”

With a soft pop, the man in question appeared. “Right here, sorry about that.” Nicholas waved his wand and conjured a chair in between Hermione and Remus. He smooched an irritated Hermione on the cheek and sat down. “So... what have I missed?”

Sirius and James let out highly amused laughs. Hermione just hissed at him, “God I hate you.”

Tonks smiled as one of the few who understood what was going on. She deviously extrapolated, “You’re dumping him just like that? Damn Hermy, that’s cold.”

Hermione frowned and grumbled.

Nicholas raised an eyebrow at Hermione. “So that’s it? You’ve had enough of this sailor and are kicking me back to port?”

Hermione was confused and irritated. She cattily growled, “Yes, Nicholas. I think it’s time we parted ways.”

“Meh,” Nicholas agreed and condescendingly patted Hermione on her hand. “You’re too old for me anyway.” Nicholas grinned and clapped

loudly. "So, Hermione, does this mean you're finally going to deal with the sexual tension between you and Mr. Potter?"

Hermione looked between Nicholas and Harry wondering what the hell they were doing. She decided it was only fair. "You know, you may be right. I think I will throw my hat into the ring for the candidacy of Harry's official exclusive girlfriend."

"See?" Remus smiled now that he had his own person to back. "Hermione!"

"Ginny!" James insisted.

"Tonks!" Sirius campaigned.

"Luna!" Lily happily argued.

"Hermione!"

"Ginny!"

"Tonks!"

"Luna!"

"Tonks!"

"Dammit Padfoot, it wasn't your turn!" James whined. "I mean... Ginny!"

"That's enough!" Harry yelled back. "The next person who starts arguing who I should be dating is going to lose their mouth for a week!"

James, Remus, Sirius, and Lily quickly shut up quailing under Harry's angry stare. Harry nodded at their obedience and turned to the four girls at his table. "Is this really how things have to be? Tonks? Ginny? Hermione? Luna?"

Ginny straightened herself up and pushed her chest out a bit. "Harry," she began softly. "I would like you to be my boyfriend. I try to pretend dating all these other girls doesn't bother me, but I do know that I'd much rather be yours and for you to only be mine."

Tonks sighed and morphed so she looked more doe-eyed and innocent. "You know how much I care about you, Harry. I don't want to be constantly competing with my friends for your affection."

Sirius silently cheered and pumped his fist at the clever use of friendship in Tonks' plea.

Hermione nodded sadly and pointed up to the head table. "Do you see how happy Ron and Michelle are? Knowing that they will always have each other and are the most important thing in the world to each other? I would like to have that someday, and I can't see you making a decision unless we force you to."

Harry was beginning to understand what they were all saying. He looked at the unconcerned blonde. "Luna?"

Luna looked at Harry and shrugged. "I can certainly understand why you didn't want to tell them that you love them. I think for most people hearing that would make them happy, not want to break up with you. I've liked the time we've spent together and would like more. But not at the cost of happiness, neither yours nor ours."

Harry looked at the four girls, three of which had hopeful but sad looks on their faces. He wasn't certain but he thought they were all doing their best to push a couple tears out. He stood up and began slowly walking around the table. Periodically resting a comforting hand on a girl's shoulder, or painfully flicking the ear of a Marauder. "So that's it? This is how it's ending for us?"

Ginny looked at all the other confused expressions. "Err, Harry? When you say us, which one of us is not included in that one?"

Harry shook his head with a satisfied smile as he gave Tonks shoulder a squeeze. "None of you are excluded. All of your friendships mean more to me than anything else. And I'm not about to

choose one of you over the other. You all mean too much to me, so I guess we'll just stop dating."

"Wait!" Lily insisted wildly knowing her own end was approaching. She was hoping to get an idea of who her son was going to spend the rest of his life with before she departed the mortal world again. "No, this isn't right. You're in love with all four of these girls. You should be seeing if you have a future with someone."

Harry smiled as he continued walking, giving Ginny's shoulder a gentle squeeze. "I... hmm... I'm beginning to think you're right about that. And it is true, that there is one person here who knows me better than anyone else. One person I feel a far stronger connection with." Harry smiled back at Hermione's victorious grin, as well as Tonks' smile, and then Ginny's. "I cannot imagine a future without any of you girls in it, but there's a bigger part of my life that only one of you can fill." Harry continued circling, all the people hanging on his every word. "And I think it's time I truly took our relationship to the next level." Harry stopped and placed a hand each on Hermione and her ex-boyfriend's shoulder. His eyes twinkled as he looked down and asked "How bout it, old man? You ready for this my sweet Squickolas?"

Nicholas looked up at Harry happily. "I am if you are, my honey-loving Harry Bear."

"Eskimo Kiss!" Harry cheered and bent down to rub noses with Nicholas.

"Butterfly Kiss!" Nicholas called back and twittered his eyelashes against Harry's cheek.

"What!" Tonks and Hermione angrily yelled.

"What?" Ginny, Sirius, Lily, Remus, and James all yelled out dumbfounded.

"But you're not even gay!" Ginny desperately argued.

"I know," Harry agreed. "But I'm confused... and that could be the same thing."

Nicholas smiled at the ladies hopefully knowing this had the best shot at not hurting them by choosing any girl over the others. "We don't want to lose your friendship."

Harry nodded. "But since dating all of you is obviously not what I'd thought it was, I owe it to myself to see if this is."

Hermione and Tonks were both just gurgling and sputtering, with spittle flying everywhere.

Ginny, James, Sirius, Remus, and Lily were just staring silently in disbelief, their bottom jaws hanging open.

Tonks regained control of her motor functions. "But Harry! When have you and Nicholas ever even... I mean... blurggahhbleh."

Harry shrugged. "Well actually, those magical rings we made? That started from when we wanted to make a better coc-"

"We don't want to hear this!" James interrupted a bit too loudly. Everyone stared at him for his outburst. Harry and Nicholas enjoyed the awkward silence, taking advantage of the opportunity to twinkle into each others' eyes. The fact that this was an entire Legilimens conversation no one else knew.

"Luna," Harry explained. "I'm sorry you got caught in this crossfire. I know you were fine with the status quo, but I guess it was damaging my other friends more than they've been letting on."

Luna shrugged and smiled. "It's been fun." She turned towards Nicholas. "And if you and Harry are comfortable with each other, give me a call. I could teach you both a thing or two. We could play ping pong."

Nicholas just smiled brightly and nodded fervently. Harry's eyes widened comically, while his mum cheered, "Luna!"

“Oh I’m sorry. You’re welcome to play too Bessie,” Luna apologized. “I didn’t mean to leave you out. Just fair warning, I leave no bottom unspanked.”

Lily really began to wonder what she’d done to her sweet little manwhore of a son.

Today was a day that most students were anticipating while many professors were dreading. It was hard not to notice Professors Prongs, Padfoot, and Bessie were in the midst of a prank war with Professors Potter, Granger, Malfoy, Snape, the Caretaker, and the Headmaster. Frequently it seemed also former Professors Lupin and Flamel, as well as the Weasley twins and their younger sister would come by Hogwarts just to make it easier to get pranked. Some people thought they were just trying to save Professor Potter’s team the hassle of having to seek them out. Why they kept coming back to the school not many students understood though the muggleborns seemed to mention something about Charlie Brown kicking something. But they were expecting some fireworks today. They may not know what was coming, but there was no way April Fools Day would go by without incident.

Lily came running frantically into the Hospital Wing with her husband following behind her. “Poppy! Poppy! Oh dear god, this is bad.”

“Professor Bessie,” Poppy Pomfrey scolded. “What have you gotten yourself into this time? Extra body parts? Vanished bones? Or a good old fashioned poison?”

“No no,” Lily blushed thinking about her recent visits here. “It’s just... well I woke up early this morning throwing up. I took a potion to settle my stomach and thought nothing of it. Until I woke up just a few minutes ago needing to throw up again. Now this hasn’t happened to me since... well...”

“You have been practicing safe sex with your husband, haven’t you?” Poppy frowned.

“Of course I have,” Lily begged. “It’s just nothing is one hundred percent. And it’s not only that but...”

James was trying not to be too happy. "We felt him kick."

Poppy looked at the two older Potters in disbelief. "You felt him kick? On the first day you got morning sickness?"

"Strong bugger," James frowned. "I hope he turns out alright."

Poppy looked over their shoulders to make sure the coast was clear. "You realize you aren't exactly alive, and you're inside muggle bodies? Your magic is in your soul, in you, not your blood or body."

Lily and James paled having temporarily forgotten that fact.

"Do you have any idea how many ridiculous complications there could be?" Poppy insisted. She grumbled quietly to herself. "This is worse than the Weasley twins' puppy." Poppy cleared off an area and closed the Infirmary door. "Alright Professor Bessie. Hop up on that table and I'll see if you're actually pregnant or if you just got some bad lettuce."

James stood to the side holding his wife's hand, while Poppy ran a series of curious diagnostic tests. Each time she just kept shaking her head in disbelief. "Well, this is going to be another off the books exam. You are pregnant."

"Yes!" James cheered. He was whooping and hollering, while his wife and Poppy stared at him. When he finally started coughing and losing his voice, Madame Pomfrey continued. "Now, from I can tell it is vaguely humanoid... but," Poppy winced. "I'm hoping it's your animagus forms and that you perhaps were intimate while transformed."

Lily nodded resolutely.

Poppy made a pained face. "I wasn't actually asking for confirmation and I wished I hadn't received it but the point I'm trying to reach is that... it has antlers."

Lily paled. "That's going to tear up my-"

“Ewww,” James interrupted.

Poppy nodded. “Yes, it very well could.” She looked at them appraisingly. “The other option is that they are not antlers but horns.”

“You mean...”

Poppy nodded sadly. “It might be a demon growing inside you. In the meantime, let me get you a nutrient potion and on that should quell your morning sickness,” she ordered and went back to her storeroom.

“Could you get me a glass of water?” James asked.

Poppy returned with the potion and two glasses of water. “Here you go, drink it all up. And we’ll figure it out from here.”

Scrambling madly into the room was an extremely furry Professor Padfoot. “Poppy sweetie!” Sirius called out. “I’m having some problems.”

Poppy took one look at all the grey fur completely covering the Professor and just laughed at him. “Not just your palms anymore, Professor Padfoot?”

“Poppy!” Sirius raised his furry hand over his heart. “You know what just your presence does to me. Are you hoping to make me blind?”

“Get over here and sit down,” She ordered with a roll of her eyes.

Sirius sat down and let Poppy cast a few spells on him. She asked, “I assume you tried to remove the fur and were unable to?”

Sirius nodded with a smile.

“Alright,” Poppy insisted. “I’m going to try a couple more diagnostics. These may take some time, so don’t move much, and do not attempt any magic while I’m doing this.”

Sirius nodded and turned towards his friends. “What brings you two down here? You look normal enough.”

James smiled brightly, "Lils is pregnant with a demon!"

Sirius laughed. "That's a new one! Think it's real or a prank?"

James frowned. "Crap. I forgot it's April Fools. Aww dammit."

"Oh dear," Poppy gasped and stood up. "Oh my... Professor Padfoot, this is not good."

"What?" Sirius asked. "What's the problem with my fur? Can't you remove it?"

Poppy shook her head. "Yes I can. A simple potion neutralizer should fix that for you... it's just what else came up in your results."

Sirius tried to smile though he was little worried. "Am I too virile to be human?"

"Professor... Sirius," she continued softly. "I'm afraid you've contracted the lycanthropy curse."

"What?"

Poppy continued. "I'm well aware that on the full moon you like to frolic in the Forbidden Forest. And traditionally lycanthropy is not a sexually transmitted disease-

"What!" Sirius gulped.

Poppy continued on ignoring him. "But I'm sure things can get out of hand and those rough, playful love bites can have far-reaching consequences. All it would take is for you to not have completed a full animagus transformation, or to have an open wound when you transformed back and..." Poppy sighed. "I'm sorry Mr. Black."

"Padfoot!" Remus cheered as he entered the Hospital Wing. "You're furry!"

“Moony?” Sirius asked sadly. Remus just looked confused at the melancholy tone of the furry man.

Sirius looked back at Madame Pomfrey. “Are you sure?”

Poppy nodded and cast a common diagnostic spell. “I’m sure. That glowing blue flash in response is accurate. You have contracted it.” She waved over Remus. “Come here, I’ll show you.” She cast the spell on Remus and there was no glow in response. “What the-”

“Poppy,” Remus asked. “Did I hear you pronounce that spell correctly?”

Poppy tried it again with a shake of her head. The same results came back. She turned towards Lily and James and cast it on both of them. Also no response from the spell. “Mr. Lupin... have you been cured?”

Remus stood there in shock. “No, I transformed last week. Padfoot was with me, he saw it.”

“How the hell...” Sirius trailed off in thought. After a moment he asked, “Moony, try and transform into a big black dog.”

Remus looked at Sirius oddly. “Are we the target of some prank already? Besides your fur I mean.”

“Just try it, please!”

Remus closed his eyes and concentrated. Having helped his friends on the transformation, he was familiar with this step. After a few thick suspenseful seconds, he opened his eyes. “Nope, nothing. Am I really not a werewolf anymore?”

Poppy shook her head. “As far as I can tell, no, you are not. Could you have transferred it to Professor Padfoot through some dark demonic ritual? Or unexpected side effect?”

Remus looked horrified at that thought. “That’s not possible... is it?”

Poppy's mouth was open, with an uncertain look on her face. She looked over at Sirius with his closed eyes and concentrated look on his face. "What are you doing, Mr. Black?"

Sirius opened his eyes. "Trying to transform. It's not working but it's like it's still there." Sirius closed his eyes and focused again, this time trying harder and harder letting out grunts of frustration. With a soft pop, Remus was replaced with a large black Grim-looking dog.

"Whoa!" Sirius yelped at the sight. The Remus-dog fell back on its haunches and just stared at Sirius. Sirius laughed at the look on his face. The dog slowly moved forward and began to swat at Sirius' leg. "Oww dammit!"

The dog just gave Sirius a look that said 'change me back now.' Sirius reluctantly nodded, closed his eyes, and concentrated. It took some visible effort on Sirius' part and with a pop the dog was gone. In its place on the floor sat a queasy looking Remus Lupin. "Oh lord that felt weird."

"What the hell did he do to us?" Sirius asked.

"You're a werewolf now? And you can turn me into Padfoot?" Remus repeated just to clarify. "What the hell..."

"Did we get a brain transplant?" Sirius theorized.

Lily laughed at Sirius. "I think that's assuming too much about the materials he started with."

"Prongs, Bessie," Remus asked just now noticing Bessie was in a hospital gown. "What are you doing here?"

"Pregnant," Lily said with a raised hand.

"Demon baby," James added.

Remus' lips curled into a small smile. "Right."

Sirius accepted a potion from Madame Pomfrey and asked, "Can Polyjuice transfer abilities?"

Madame Pomfrey shook her head observing all of the fur falling off Sirius. "Certainly not standard Polyjuice. And I find it hard to believe Dementor Blood could be changing it enough to do something like that."

Remus shook his head. "It can't. If it could, then this would practically be a cure for werewolves by just transforming with Polyjuice once a month. And Harry would have said something sooner if that were true. Why'd you ask?"

Sirius shrugged. "I wondered if he transformed us into each other with Polyjuice, and then obliviated all of our memories, replicated them into each others' bodies, and set a special trigger on my, or rather your, animagus transformation implanting that into my, or your, brain."

"Padfoot," Remus slowly answered looking at his friend. "Did you understand what you just said?"

"Not really." Sirius began clenching his eyes shut and concentrating hard, now that he was completely fur-free. Remus hurried over and smacked Sirius in the arm. "Knock it off."

"Sorry," Sirius admitted ashamedly. "Thanks Madame Pomfrey."

"Wait a second," she called out as he and Remus stood up to leave. "Don't you want to try and figure out about the lycanthropy?"

Sirius shook his head. "I could be pregnant with a demon baby right now, and I'd just wait until tomorrow to see if it's still true then."

"Godric dammit," James agreed. He helped Lily up and they decided to join them in the Great Hall for lunch. "Thanks Poppy."

"Yes, thank you Poppy," Lily echoed. The matron just shook her head with a pleased smile.

The group walked into the Great Hall and up to the Head Table to grab some lunch. Plans and schemes that Remus only half-heartedly endorsed, were temporarily forgotten. Mainly he just had to keep Sirius from turning him into a dog.

Albus saw the four Marauders entering the Great Hall in front of him, and thought perhaps he should wait a moment before entering. He had an ominous feeling about today. This was not a feeling he particularly cared for, so he was being a bit more cautious than usual.

Luna Lovegood approached him from behind. "Good afternoon, Headmaster." She greeted.

"Hello Luna," Albus said with a smile. "Joining us for lunch today?"

Luna nodded. "If that's okay with you. I was also hoping to track down the Weasley twins and was informed they would probably be here today."

Albus motioned for her to lead the way, and replied. "I would be surprised if they missed out on celebrating their birthday with a few pranks."

Luna stopped and turned to Albus. "Can I ask you a personal question?"

Albus nodded with a smile. "You may ask. After I hear it, I may decide if answering would be appropriate."

Luna nodded thinking that made sense. "Your beard is very impressive."

"Thank you," Albus accepted the compliment, curious to where she was going with this line of inquiry.

"How old were you when you figured out where the clitoris is located?"

Albus blinked. "Umm..."

“Oh my, I’m sorry Headmaster. I should have prefaced that question.” Luna corrected herself. “Do you know where the clitoris is located?”

Albus actually blushed. “I was sixteen I believe, Miss Lovegood.”

Luna smiled brightly. “Thanks Headmaster. Oh, there’s Fred and George. If you’ll excuse me.”

Albus just watched the intriguing blonde stroll up to the twins and ask immediately, “Do you think my left breast looks bigger than my right?”

Albus just shook his head and sat himself down in his usual chair. He helped himself to some lunch and was about to begin eating when he heard an extremely familiar voice whisper into his ear, “The Weasley twins have set you up to be pranked. When they walk over to Padfoot, immediately drink what’s now in your goblet. It is a Draught of Living Death. I’ll take care of the rest. When Harry gives you the antidote later, you will understand.”

Normally Albus would not trust a whispered voice, but with a subtle glance over his shoulder, and a more focused intense look he recognized that it was indeed, himself back there who had whispered into his ear. He looked up and saw the Weasley twins approaching the Head Table. Albus lifted his goblet to his mouth and began to drink right as a massive explosion went off directly in front of him. Moments before the potion took over Albus’ system, he recognized a magical representation of his former nemesis Grindelwald.

The twins knew pranking Harry could possibly be an exercise in futility. So they set themselves an easier target. They were planning to scare the pants off of the Headmaster instead. They spent weeks perfecting a working magic-capable Grindelwald all set to terrorize the old man. They cast the silent trigger and acted shocked by the magical explosion. They carefully watched the Headmaster’s eyes widen at the sight of his long dead foe. Just as they were going to sit back and enjoy the show, the Headmaster’s eyes rolled backwards into his head and he fell out of his seat in a dead faint.

Fred and George just looked at each other thinking this was not part of the plan. This was the Headmaster. He shouldn’t be fainting at the

mere sight of an old nemesis. They specifically chose Grindelwald because his appearance wouldn't frighten anyone who hadn't been alive for at least 70 or 80 years or had ever feared the long dead Dark Lord.

Minerva saw the telltale sign of a prank and shrieked out loud when the massive cloud of smoke erupted and the ground exploded in front of her revealing Grindelwald. She turned to Albus only to find him crumpled on the floor. She hurried over to him and felt for a pulse. She felt nothing. She put her ear to his mouth. She jumped up, "He's not breathing!"

With a pop, Harry appeared in the midst of the Great Hall. He saw Fred and George looking as pale as he had ever seen them. "What did you two do?"

"Nothing!"

"It wasn't us!"

Harry just gave them a harsh stare.

Fred blurted out, "It was George!" at the exact same moment George exclaimed, "It was Fred!"

"Traitor!" they exclaimed angrily before their faces softened and they said in unison, "I forgive you."

Harry hurried up to the Headmaster. He made a show of checking his vitals. "God dammit you two! He's only about 160 years old, you knuckleheads!"

The Weasley twins hurriedly banished all signs of the Grindelwald illusion and looked deadly serious.

"I can't get a pulse," Minerva frantically relayed. "I don't think he's breathing."

Harry placed his hand over the Headmaster's chest and a bright flash of light exploded. The Headmaster began convulsing a little and was

frothing at the mouth. "Move Minerva, I'll take him to the Hospital Wing." Harry gathered up the Headmaster into his arms and both of them disappeared with a pop.

The pair reappeared in Madame Pomfrey's enclosed office. Harry yelled out, "Poppy! In here! It's the Headmaster!"

Madame Pomfrey came bustling into the office. She saw Harry and the dead looking Headmaster. "Do we have time to strip him naked and hang him from the rafters in the owlery?"

Harry grinned, "Poppy! A man's life is in danger! Do something!"

"Dammit, Harry! I'm a healer not a god." Poppy giggled. "Always wanted to say something like that. Wake up the old man. You two have a lot of work to do."

Harry administered the antidote to the Headmaster, and gave him a pepper-up to wake him quicker.

Albus closed his eyes as the steam went shooting out his ears. "Merlin, this stuff is wonderful. So did it work?"

Harry nodded solemnly. "I'm afraid you've had a heart attack and died as a direct result of the Weasley twin's actions. There was nothing we could do."

Albus recognized Poppy's office and his matron. "Poppy, I'm impressed you could be so openly mischievous."

Poppy Pomfrey's hair morphed into a vibrant pink color. "I'm afraid Madame Pomfrey earned a well-deserved day off. And we needed a way to get all those pesky people to drink the foul tasting potions we cooked up and think nothing of the strange spells they get hit with."

"Ooooh," Albus grinned. "I like it. I'm looking forward to seeing the effects."

"Not so fast old man," Harry interrupted. "You and I are heading back a few hours. We've got a fair amount of work ahead of us."

"I get to come with you!" Albus cheered excitedly. "I've always wanted to see what your world was like between Nicholas and Harry."

Tonks frowned. "I think we all do, but seeing as you're the only one who can make himself invisible consistently... lucky old geezer."

"I trust you won't have any reservations about pranking our own team? Nicholas does have a reputation to maintain." Harry asked.

"On this day, I believe everyone is fair game."

"Excellent," Harry grinned and turned towards Tonks. "Thanks Poppy, but I believe Mr. Potter and the Headmaster's corpse are probably waiting for your tender mercies just outside of here."

Harry expanded the chain on the time turner hidden around his neck and pulled the Headmaster close to him. Harry looked at the Headmaster who nodded, and he twisted it a few times to go back into the early morning.

Albus looked down at his watch. "Four in the morning? Goodness... so I'm assuming you know where we're headed?"

Harry nodded. "Yup, and I think we should stay invisible from here on out unless we have reason not to be. We should mask our scent too. Padfoot and Moony's noses will pick us up otherwise." Harry and the Headmaster both disappeared from view and hid their own odor. Upon unspoken agreement they pushed forward some mage magic and they were fully able to see one and other. "Perfect. First stop is to give my Mum some morning sickness."

Harry grabbed the Headmaster's hand and popped them to just outside his parents' quarters. Harry focused his magic onto a solid telepathic link, which Albus had to relax his shields and accept. "Ahh... just like old times," Harry sent down the link. "Now don't forget to speak through this and not your mouth. It'll be easier than constantly manipulating silencing charms."

“Yes, yes,” Albus agreed testing out their telepathic connection. “I had forgotten how curious this feels.”

Harry nodded and quietly opened the door to his parents’ room.

“So is this how you and Nicholas are always in sync?” Albus asked. “And you would think your parents would know better than to leave their room unwarded.”

Harry shook his head. “Naw, with Nicky I don’t even need eye contact for a Legilimens conversation. It’s as simple as broadcasting thoughts that only I can understand since there’s often more than one of me around, although eye contact makes it even easier. And my Dad does have some pretty impressive wards around here.” Harry was grinning. “He just chose to tie them into Hogwarts, which in this case is like making me the anchor stone. Usually I don’t have to do anything, but since you’re with me, I’m manipulating them into ignoring you.”

Harry went into the bathroom and sprinkled a little powder into the front potion. “What was that?” Albus asked.

“Just a little mix that will make Mum’s belly feel warmer and tingly. Tasteless and harmless though.” Harry went and cast a spell to make his mother ill. She ran to the bathroom and threw up. After emptying her stomach, she drank the front potion in the cabinet to settle it. Albus and Harry smiled at how easy this was, while Lily went right back to sleep.

“Alright, next stop is to make Padfoot furry.”

Albus followed obediently. They reached his quarters, protected in the same way as Harry’s parents. More than likely Sirius and James were working together on their wards. Harry sent through the link, “This one is all you. They’ve got a stockpile of potion neutralizers against my spellwork. But since you’ve yet to directly go after them like this, they won’t even think of trying one geared at you.”

Albus proceeded to transfigure the top layer of skin into long soft grey hair. “Won’t they try a general neutralizer?”

Harry nodded. "Yup, but that'll fail because I'm going to put a parseltongue lock on your transfiguration. The stupid neutralizers geared towards me overcome the parseltongue lock. Not really sure how to be honest."

"But won't they try the neutralization geared to you first, overcoming the lock, and then the general one to overcome my spell?"

"Yes, but my parseltongue spells aren't neutralized if the magic is minute enough, like say in a simple locking charm. If I did the other magic then the whole thing would fail but this way it works."

"Are you sure?" Albus asked doubtfully.

Harry shook his head. "Are we from the future?"

Albus blushed and forgot this part must be predestined somehow. The invisible pair went back to James and Lily's room. Harry explained, "Another bout of morning sickness, and now the awareness of that warm and fuzzy feeling should do the trick."

Once more Lily ran to the bathroom throwing up. This time Albus jostled James to wake him up too. When he saw his wife was ill, he went into the bathroom to help her. "Upset stomach, hun?" He asked.

"Yes," Lily replied. "I'm sorry. I didn't mean to wake you."

"Don't worry about it," James answered. "I think I've probably woken you up a few more times than you have me. Actually... when was the last time you were sick?"

Harry and Albus were blanketed in a silencing charm and snickering away.

Lily eyes widened as she recognized an odd feeling. "You know my stomach does feel a bit funny. You don't think..."

"Think you ate some bad lettuce?" James asked.

“No,” Lily explained. “I haven’t felt like this since... since I was pregnant with Harry.”

James’ eyes bulged out. “You’re pregnant!”

Lily shook her head. “No, of course not... well, I don’t think... but it does feel weird.”

James put his hand on his wife’s belly to try and soothe it. Harry on the other hand knew he needed to try and stick with colorless spells and did a low-level accio on his Mum’s belly.

“Oh my Godric!” James jumped back. “Did you feel that?”

Lily’s eyes were wide in fear and hope as she nodded affirmatively. “We should go see Poppy.”

The two of them hurried off the bathroom floor and ran out of their quarters.

“You’re evil,” Albus smiled and sent through the link. “Giving them this false hope.”

“I yam what I yam.” Harry replied. “Now let’s beat them there.” Harry grabbed onto Albus and popped them up to the Hospital Wing.

“Alright Tonks, you ready for this?” Harry asked out loud.

Poppy Pomfrey span around looking for the source of the voice. “Harry? You’re here?”

“Me and the Headmaster both. We gotta stay invisible, but I’ll be sending you Legilimens instructions.” Harry explained. “No laughing either.”

Tonks giggled. “I don’t know if I’ll be able to do that.”

Albus spoke up, “Actually Miss Tonks, it’s not that I don’t trust you. It’s that I don’t trust you. So I’m going to cast and hold an unamusement charm on you. Have no fear, I use them on myself

quite frequently. They can be invaluable.” Albus waved his invisible wand and settled down the giggly woman.

“Hmmp,” Harry said. “I always wondered how you stayed so calm. The older me usually has to keep settling the younger me. Okay, get ready, here they come.”

“Poppy! Poppy! Oh dear god, this is bad.” Lily yelled out as she and James entered.

“Professor Bessie,” Poppy Pomfrey scolded. “What have you gotten yourself into this time? Extra body parts? Vanished bones? Or a good old fashioned poison?”

Albus sent through the link to Harry, “Tonks is good. That sounds just like Poppy.”

Harry listened to his Mum explain what happened and sent Tonks a Legilimens message, “Point out that the kid would be made from Vernon and Petunia’s bodies. And mention it might just be bad lettuce.”

Albus watched the scene impassively fearing what would happen if Lily and James really were pregnant.

Harry continued feeding Tonks, “Just wave your wand and make up some spells. Try Wucka, Wucka Wucka and Bippity Boppity Boop.”

Albus erected the silencing charm around him again as the spells being cast on Lily were cracking him up. Harry knew he needed his father to take something, so he was manipulating his elemental control over air and water to dry out his father’s throat.

Harry told Tonks to announce that she is pregnant. After a moment, he then hurriedly added, “Wait no! Tell them it has antlers!”

Albus was laughing openly at how seriously the Potters were taking the news. He sent to Harry, “You should point out at that stage, antlers might be horns. Could be a demon.”

Harry was snickering and quickly relayed that to Tonks. Another moment later, Harry sent to Tonks, "Okay, now go to the storeroom and we'll get the potions ready."

Harry and Albus hurriedly followed Tonks into the back room wondering how to get his father to take a potion, when James called out asking for a glass of water. "Oh thank goodness!" Harry whispered as he frantically poured the potion he'd been saving up into a glass, and disillusioned the glass. "This is dad's water," Harry handed to Tonks. "And this will make Mum's stomach feel better." Tonks took them and bustled out to the Potters.

Harry stayed invisible behind his father and quickly neutralized the elder Potter's tastebuds. Harry sent through telepathy to Albus, "I've wanted to use this one on dear old Dad for a while now."

"What is it?" Albus asked back.

"It's a potion St. Mungo's uses for training healers. Helps them identify muggle illnesses and symptoms by replicating certain ones."

Albus chuckled. "And which one is that?"

Harry shook his invisible head. "You'll just have to wait and find out. I'll trigger it later. Don't want Poppy to become suspect."

They looked up as furry Sirius ran into the Hospital Wing. Harry sent a Legilimens to Tonks, "Goodness! You're not supposed to laugh that much." Tonks settled herself, wondering if the unamusement was wearing off, or perhaps Padfoot just really looked that ridiculous.

Harry then instructed to Tonks, "Alright... now. Break the news to him that he's a werewolf."

When Tonks solemnly announced that, Albus snorted into his beard. Harry had cast an animagus-binding spell and a couple others on Sirius while Tonks was supposedly diagnosing him. Moony's entrance was just perfect timing. Harry rattled off the plan to Tonks, who cast the werewolf identifying spell at Sirius. Harry quickly faked a blue glow.

Tonks cast the same spell on Remus, and Harry invisibly intercepted it the moment it left her wand and sent a harmless spell that replicated the other spell's color as well as set Remus up for later. Albus was impressed at how fluid the sequence was, of course being able to see the invisible person helped.

When Harry saw Sirius concentrating and trying to do his animagus transformation an idea came to him. He waited until the time was right, and then quickly transfigured Moony into Padfoot.

The looks of dumb-founded shock on everyone's face was priceless. Albus was all out laughing as Harry canceled the transfiguration and Sirius began spouting theories.

Harry canceled the parseltongue counter on Sirius' fur, and gave Tonks just a generic potion neutralizer. Harry could tell the Headmaster was in danger of breaking a hip if he kept laughing, and Tonks was fighting the unamusement charm. He subtly urged a mild repelling charm and shortly thereafter all four older Marauders had left the Hospital Wing.

When the area was clear, Harry briefly locked the main door, and made himself visible. He laughed out loud, "Tonks you were fantastic!"

Albus appeared as well and canceled his unamusement charm. "Oh happy day."

Tonks now free from the Headmaster's spell let out all the laughter she too had been holding in. "Even if they never know what you two did, that was so worth it just to see."

"Actually, we can't stay and laugh too long here," Harry interrupted cutting through the laughter. "We need to get to the Great Hall because I'm afraid Albus is about to have a heart attack."

Tonks chuckled. "Or break a hip."

Albus shook his head. “Nope. I’m about to have a heart attack. Younger versions of us will be back here momentarily.”

Tonks looked at them oddly before catching on. “Alright alright. You might need to keep up those unamusement charms if you come back here.”

“Will do,” Harry said as he disappeared from view again. Albus did as well and Harry popped them to just outside the Great Hall.

Albus spotted Luna catching up to his younger self. He sent through the telepathic link to Harry, “Miss Lovegood asks the most curious things.”

Harry chuckled back. “You’re telling me.” The pair hurried over and caught the younger Headmaster saying “Hello Luna. Joining us for lunch today?”

Luna nodded. “If that’s okay with you. I was also hoping to track down the Weasley twins and was informed they would probably be here today.”

Harry was observing the interaction and asked through the link, “Have you ever time-traveled with Luna before?”

Albus turned to his invisible friend said, “Nope, and shush. I couldn’t believe what she asked me here.”

Harry watched Luna stop and say, “Can I ask you a personal question?”

The younger Albus nodded. “You may ask. After I hear it, I may decide if answering would be appropriate.”

Luna pointed out, “Your beard is very impressive.”

Harry found that a bit odd and it appeared the younger Albus did as well.

Then the young blonde unabashedly asked, "Is it true impotent men say 'Umm' all the time?"

The younger Albus blinked. "Umm..." While the older Albus' eyes widened in shock.

"Never mind then." Luna continued unimpeded. "I was wondering about how many centimeters your penis was before it started shrinking?"

Harry laughed through the telepathic link while the younger Albus actually blushed and answered. "I was sixteen I believe, Miss Lovegood."

"What the bloody hell is going on?" The older Albus replied in shock through the link.

Luna just looked pleased. "Thanks Headmaster. Oh, there's Fred and George. If you'll excuse me."

Harry, the younger and the older Headmaster all just watched the curious young woman stroll up to the twins and without even greeting them ask, "Do you think my ass looks bigger in this light?"

Harry laughed at the matching dumbfounded looks on the two Headmasters. "Luna is fun, isn't she?"

The invisible Headmaster turned to the equally invisible Harry and telepathically sent, "What the hell is she?"

"I take it that wasn't what you two talked about earlier?" Harry mentally replied.

Albus just shook his head in disbelief. "She asked me how old I was when I figured out where the clitoris is located."

Harry nodded. "Yeah, Luna's fun like that."

"What... but... how... I mean...Huh?" Albus asked completely baffled.

Harry shook his head. "I have no idea why. But for some reason it always seems to fit her personality. Sometimes she follows the timelines, sometimes she's speaking in pig latin."

Albus sat there for a moment contemplating the impossibilities of time-travel's effect on the universe, before Harry snapped him out of it. "Wake up, old man! You need to give yourself that Draught of Living Death and fast. You won't have time to explain much to your younger self."

Albus realized where he was and what was going on. He hurried up behind himself while Harry slowly followed hidden from view. Albus whispered into his own ear and then watched himself fall to the floor, seemingly dead. He felt a little bit guilty at how worried Minerva was, but Harry assured him that she'll be fine.

Harry mockingly sent through the link, "Here comes the hero," just as a visible Harry Potter appeared. Harry sent to Albus, "Let's have some fun and give you convulsions."

Shortly after the visible Harry made a little light show, the invisible Harry and Albus were sending spells at the dead looking Albus, making him froth at the mouth and shake uncontrollably. "This is fun," Albus agreed through the link. The visible Harry briefly turned towards the two invisible people and winked as he disappeared with the Headmaster.

Albus sighed a bit and asked Harry, "So what now?"

Harry explained, "Well now, believe it or not, we need to go back a couple hours."

Albus looked at Harry incredulously. "Are you serious?" When Harry smiled Albus quickly shook his finger and added, "Don't say it."

Harry frowned playfully. "Fine, and yes... because now it's Nicholas turn."

"I'm getting too old for this," Albus moaned.

Harry nodded. "Yeah, you are. I was afraid the twins might startle you too much and give you a heart attack. So I figured we should teach them a lesson and give you a heart attack."

Albus shook his head. "I thought I understood time-travel. And then I met Luna Lovegood."

"I know exactly what you mean," Harry reiterated. "I thought I understood sex, and then I met Luna Lovegood. And by met I mean-"

"Yes, thank you Harry. I know what you mean." Albus interrupted. "Let's get some food before we go back. I'm famished."

Harry agreed and popped both of them back into the kitchens. Harry shifted himself visible and then Albus did the same.

"Headmaster!" a little elf's high-pitched voice screamed. "Yous alive!"

Albus took out his pocket watch, "No... I think I'm dead at the moment. Though I could be wrong. Anyways, can we get some lunch down here?"

The little elf nodded immediately and Harry and Albus had a table stocked full of food laid out before them. The pair filled their bellies to the brim and thanked the elves before shifting out of visibility again.

"Is it time?" Albus quipped with a smile.

Harry rolled his eyes though he wasn't sure if Albus saw him or not. "Let's get out of the kitchen before we go." They moved to an empty alcove and Harry threw the time turner over them again. Not quite as many turns this time, they were back in the morning again. Harry reached into his pocket and handed Albus a small vial.

Telepathic link still intact, Albus asked, "What's this?"

Harry explained. "Let's start off in Hermione's office, since she's got class later. I thought perhaps you'd be willing to haunt her for a bit, and steal a book of hers."

"I'm going to haunt her?" Albus asked. "I assume this is a ghostly potion? But I'm not dead yet."

Harry smiled. "Oh come on, Albus. You're a master of transfiguration, I thought you should change your appearance a bit and become the ghost of the Librarian of Alexandria."

Albus smiled at the thought. "I could do that."

"Good," Harry nodded. "Because I need to be able to deny involvement, as I'm certain Hermione will be unfairly pointing her finger at me for this one."

Hermione Granger was grading some of her student's essays having skipped breakfast, as she planned to skip all her meals today. Better safe than sorry she figured. Her head was down when she felt a breeze in her office. She looked up suddenly and thought she saw something moving. After a few minutes with no response, she assumed she was getting paranoid and went back to her grading.

Another breeze went by and she looked up suddenly. She saw a ghost disappearing through the wall. "Who's there?" She called out and as expected got no response. She pretended to go back to her grading, by dropping her head, but she kept her eyes forward trying to suss out the disturbance.

She snapped her head towards her bookshelf as she saw the slightest movement, but when she was inspecting it head on, she only saw a single book teetering a little.

A soft voice carried towards her, sounding ancient and hoarse. "Common food lists... this is ridiculous... preposterous... ruffians..."

"What the hell is going on?" Hermione asked loudly. The quiet voice had stopped.

"Dammit Harry!" Hermione called out. She gave it a moment's consideration and focused on her magic calling out loud, "Potty!"

It took him a few seconds, but Harry Potter popped into existence in ready battle mode right next to Hermione Granger. Harry's eyes scanned the area vigilantly. After assessing no danger he turned to Hermione and asked, "What's up? You got me scared there."

"Harry, what the hell sort of prank are you pulling?"

Harry tapped his chin, "Tricking my parents with a demon baby, Sirius and Remus will probably prank themselves, and hopefully foiling whatever plans the twins have hatched."

"Is that all?"

"There's a potion I've been meaning to give to Dad."

"You're not turning into a ghost?"

"Oooh," Harry smiled. "That could be a good one!"

"Dammit Harry," Hermione insisted. "Someone's up to something around here because I-"

A massive thwack startled the pair as a heavy tome landed on the desk between Hermione and Harry. Hermione's eyes widened as she thought she had hidden this particular book safely. "You!" an old and wizened voice declared, pointing a bony gnarled finger at Harry.

Harry looked up to see possibly the most ancient looking ghost he had ever seen. "Me?"

"I trusted you with the knowledge in this book. I gifted it you because I found you worthy, and this is how you treat it!"

"What are you talking about?" Harry asked thankful for the unamusement charm Albus had cast on him. "I bought this book at an antique mall."

"Bah!" the angry ghost insisted. "You honestly think a priceless piece of history like this can just be stumbled upon? I placed it there for you to find! And you just gave it away like some trinket!"

“Who the hell are you?” Harry asked, noticing Hermione’s wide eyes.

“Did you not even read any of the book?” The ghost asked incredulously. “I am the Librarian of Alexandria!”

Hermione eeped in fright. The ghost turned his angry stare towards her. “And you... you unworthy vile... I have watched you, I have judged you, I have weighed your worth, and you have been found wanting. This book will no longer serve you.”

“No!” Hermione begged. “I love it! I’m sorry!”

The ghost bobbed up and down staring at her. “I have seen the additions you have made to the book. It is too valuable a tool to waste away in your hands.” The ghost swooped down and picked it up. “I must find worthier hands to maintain this Tome.” And just like that the ghost and book disappeared.

Hermione looked heartbroken. She saw Harry’s look of surprise and then noticed the date on the calendar. “Oh God dammit Harry! I can’t believe you did that!”

Harry shook his head, “It wasn’t me Hermione. I’ve never seen that ghost before in my life.”

“Oh sorry,” Hermione snarled. “I suppose Nicholas might know. Or maybe you just haven’t gone back in time yet to be that ghost.”

Harry pulled out his wand and looked Hermione in the eye. “I swear on my magic I am not that ghost, nor is Nicholas, nor will we ever be that ghost. I’m serious Hermione, that wasn’t me.”

Hermione saw the swirl of magic with a genuine oath. She just grumbled frustrated when the ghost appeared again, “Err... could either of you tell me where I could find a... Nymphomaniac Tonks?”

Hermione shrieked and just threw a book at the ghost in anger. The ghost’s eyes widened and he swirled away. “Unworthy indeed.”

Harry couldn't stop the smile on his face. "I'll catch up with you later, Hermie." He popped away leaving Hermione to pout like a Malfoy.

Harry met back up with Albus in their designated alcove. "Excellent work, my friend."

Albus inclined his head in thanks. "Yes, there's a transfigured grocery list that Miss Tonks will be asked to return to Professor Granger in a few hours."

Harry smiled. "Oh it's so fun to rile that girl up sometimes."

Albus nodded and saw that the ghostly potion should be wearing off soon. While they waited, Albus taught Harry how to do the unamusement charm and they planned out what they were going to do next, especially considering first year Ravenclaw and Hufflepuff Potions class had started.

Severus Snape had to leave class to go into his own personal stores. Somehow one of the wretched first years had managed to contaminate all of the dried nettles, and now no one could do anything. He left Draco in charge and turned the corner towards one of his hidden personal storerooms. Just as he did, he bumped right into someone.

Severus cursed, "Dammit Potter, watch where you're going."

"Sorry Sniv- err, I mean Severus," the man replied.

Severus looked up and saw the telltale green eyes, but right there before him the spellotape and crudely drawn scar was peeling off of the man's forehead. "You!" Severus yelled.

"Gotta go!" He exclaimed and took off down the hall. It was then that Severus realized no one should have been down that hallway, as it was a dead end other than his personal stores. Severus hurriedly sprinted after the man. After ducking down a few different hallways, Severus was catching up with him. He turned the corner and slammed hard into someone.

They fell to the floor in a tumble of flailing limbs and girlish squeaks. Severus' attempts to get up and extricate himself were failing miserably.

"Professor Snape!" the frantic other voice called out. "Will you stop struggling please?"

Severus stopped immediately recognizing the voice as the Herbology Professor.

"What on earth caused you to come barreling into me while I was carrying concentrated Flitterbloom sap?"

Severus didn't know everything there was to know about magical plants, but he did know that Flitterbloom sap was one of the strongest adhesives in the magical world.

Neville sighed. "If you don't wish to answer that, Professor, will you please at least remove your hands from my ass?"

Severus groaned out loud.

"Oh dear Merlin, you're enjoying this!" Neville squeaked. "Stop! Stop right now! Get away from me!"

"I can't!" Severus groaned thinking this couldn't possibly get any worse.

"Good Lord Severus," Albus happily exclaimed. "Am I interrupting something?"

"Headmaster!" Neville exclaimed. "Thank God you're here! Professor Snape has been getting his jollies off groping my arse! He's made it all sticky! Help me, sir! Please!"

Albus' eyes were twinkling joyously. "I'm so glad to see you've gotten over your fears Severus, but you really must control yourself. This is unacceptable behavior."

“Oh for the love Merlin,” Severus exclaimed. He yelled perhaps a bit too loudly, “I can’t take my hands off Longbottom’s bloody arse!”

“I think I’m going to be sick,” a passing sixth year gasped.

“Why is his arse bloody?” another student inquired.

“Don’t ask that!” His friend scolded him. “You don’t want to know!”

A little wandwork from the Headmaster separated the two Professors rather forcefully. Neville lunged toward the Headmaster to hug him. “Thank Merlin, you saved me!”

Severus just looked down and saw that while the Professors had been separated, the same could not be said for his hands and Neville’s pants.

“He won’t hurt you again, Neville,” Albus assured the pantsless Herbology Professor. “Not if I have anything to say about it.”

Severus was reddening while he flung his hands up and down trying to shake loose the pants.

“Severus, I suggest you go back to your quarters and think about what you’ve done. Consider yourself excused from the rest of today’s classes. We’re going to need to have a long talk later I believe.” Albus’ eyes were twinkling a little too happily. “Come on Neville. Let’s have Madame Pomfrey make sure you’re not injured.”

As soon as Severus was out of sight, and the students ran away from the Headmaster’s stern glare, Neville morphed back into Harry. He and Albus snuck away to laugh it off.

Now that the Potions class had only one Professor it was time for phase two.

Albus entered the Potions classroom and explained, “Professor Malfoy, I’m afraid there has been an... incident... with Professor Snape. He will not be returning to class for the rest of the day. You

are to conduct them on your own. And here is a fresh jar of dried nettles.”

Draco nodded, especially curious about what the word incident referred to. “Thank you, Headmaster.” While the Headmaster had distracted Draco, Harry subtly swapped out Draco’s wand for a homemade wand transfigured to look identical. Albus strode out of the room, turned himself invisible and let Harry silently fetch him. The two invisible men were looking forward to seeing how Draco would react.

Draco distributed the nettles to each student, and then addressed the class. “We have been delayed but there is still plenty of time to make your own variations on the boil cure potion. It was the potion you made in your first class, and now you will be attempting minor changes and recording the differing effects those changes give you. The original instructions are on the board.” With a wave of his wand and the announced spell he expected the instructions to appear. Unfortunately, his wand was not as agreeable. He tried the spell again, a little louder and more forcefully.

Sadly it was not the revealing spell Draco had intended to come out of his wand. No, it was another spell Draco was all too familiar with.

“The Dark Mark!” a young Ravenclaw exclaimed seeing the small green floating cloud.

Several shrieks and squeals followed, while Draco called for silence. Draco tried to dispel the unfortunate appearance. As expected, another Dark Mark exploded from Draco’s wand.

The shrieks came back along with a few cries of “Death Eater!” and “Don’t kill me, Professor!”

A small piece of Draco died that day. Having always feared children wouldn’t ever see him as anything other than his father’s son. He tried silently casting an especially dark spell that would counter most other dark magic. He was unsurprised to see a third Dark Mark fly out of the wand and lazily float in midst of the Potions classroom. He was calling for calm, and silence but not a whole lot of the students were

cooperating. He looked at his wand, and while it felt a bit different, it sure looked identical. He tried the last thing he could think of. He pointed his wand at the nearest Dark Mark and cast "Morsmordre!"

Draco felt elated to see that it canceled all the Dark Marks in the room, and the kids had stopped screaming. Draco saw the amazement on one of the student's faces as she pointed at Draco. "Your hair! It's growing!"

Draco hurriedly grabbed his pale slicked back tresses and felt them expanding rapidly. He was freaking out. "No, no. Not now!"

"Oh my god!" that same girl exclaimed. "Your roots!"

One of the boys there couldn't believe his eyes. "They're not platinum blonde at all. They're... sandy!"

"Professor Malfoy's natural hair color is ... sandy blonde!"

Draco shrieked and squealed every bit as much as the first years had. "Don't look! I'm hideous!" He fell to the floor and hid under his desk, softly sobbing to himself, ignorant of the rest of the world.

Albus and Harry on the other hand were laughing their heads off. Silently and invisibly of course, but truly entertained. Harry felt a bit of pity and cast a memory blanket charm on the doorway to the classroom.

Draco called out from under his desk, "Go on! Get out of here! All of you! Leave me alone!"

Albus would have felt pity for him, if it wasn't so sad.

As all of the student's quietly made their way out of the hastily canceled class, crossing through the doorway made them completely forget everything regarding Draco's hair color.

Once they were gone, Harry turned himself visible. He canceled the hair growth on Draco and pulled him out from under the desk. "Dear Merlin man, that was pathetic."

"I'm ruined," Draco cried. "Completely ruined."

Harry handed him his wand. "Relax you big baby. I charmed the doorway, None of the student's remember anything about your hair color."

Draco wiped the tears from his eyes and looked up hopefully. "Really? You did that? For me?"

Harry shook his head at the pompous spoiled man. "Yes, well, they don't remember anything about your hair color, but they still remember you breaking down and blubbering like a bitch."

Draco waved him off. "Well that's fine. I don't care about that."

Harry left the ridiculously relieved blonde ponce alone. He called out over his shoulder, "Happy April Fools Day, Draco."

Harry turned himself invisible again, and the Headmaster sent out another telepathic message. "Sandy? Sandy blonde! Great Googahmoogah... I had no idea."

Harry nodded with a smile. "He's a bit protective of that secret, so you might not want to let on that you know. Come on, we should head to the infirmary so you can play dead."

"Could we..." Albus asked hopefully. "Could we stop by and see Miss Lovegood again?"

Harry snickered. "Yeah, why not. It's on the way."

As they approached the area and saw the time was nearing Harry interrupted, "Now don't move too far from me. I'll use the Air element to hide us, as the second time around we know we didn't see a third version of us."

Albus nodded. "Good point. I'm glad you remembered that."

Harry rolled his eyes. "Didn't really have much of a choice. And besides, how do you think I knew we had to go back again?"

Albus conceded that. The pair got up close enough to listen in on the conversation once more.

"Good afternoon, Headmaster." Luna greeted.

"Hello Luna. Joining us for lunch today?"

"If that's okay with you. I was also hoping to track down the Weasley twins and was informed they would probably be here today."

"I would be surprised if they missed out on celebrating their birthday with a few pranks."

Luna stopped and looked at Albus with a deadly serious expression. "Can I ask you a personal question?"

Albus nodded happily. "You may ask. After I hear it, I may decide if answering would be appropriate."

"Your beard is very impressive."

"I still don't get that," Albus mentally sent to Harry from behind their invisible wall of Air. "Shush!" Harry sent back.

Luna looked deep into Albus' eyes. "Do you frequently time-travel with Harry?"

The youngest Albus blinked. "Umm..."

"Actually what I really want to know is when you died in the near future," Luna continued eerily. "Were you in the Infirmary bed fifteen or sixteen?"

Albus blushed. "I was sixteen I believe, Miss Lovegood."

Luna smiled brightly. "Remember that, Headmaster. Oh, there's Fred and George. If you'll excuse me."

The last thing the pair heard the adorable little blonde say was, "Do you think too much time-travel could implode the universe?"

Albus turned to Harry and just looked at him. He mentally explained, "Alright. That's it. Let's go get me dead. I'm through time-traveling with you. This is just plain fucked-up."

Harry laughed at the old man and sent back, "Oh come on Albus, Luna's just playing a little joke on you, that's all."

Albus shook his head. "You do what you want. I've had enough repeat conversations for the rest of my life. However many more minutes that may be."

They made their way to the Hospital Wing and seeing the coast was clear turned themselves visible again. Albus ran over to bed number sixteen and jumped into it.

The woman who was by all appearances Poppy Pomfrey came bustling out of her office, "Aww... you're not dead?"

"No!" Albus insisted. "And let's hope I won't be for a very long time."

Tonks grumbled, "Alright, alright. So what's the plan?"

Harry took into consideration, the Headmaster's desire to not terribly frighten the entire school population any more than they already had, and concocted a quick scheme that they could all agree with.

Minerva came running into the Hospital Wing, "Albus! You're alright!"

Albus smiled, "Just fine, my dear. Tip top in fact."

"Poppy?" Minerva asked.

Tonks put on her stern mothering tone. "He's perfectly okay. He was merely turning the twins prank against him."

"But you had no pulse, you weren't breathing..." Minerva questioned.

Albus smiled. "That would be the Draught of Living Death I had drank moments before Grindelwald's hasty appearance."

Minerva shook her head. "You idiotic childish boys."

Minerva was quickly informed of the plan from Poppy, while Harry and Albus set up everything and sent off the present with a school owl.

Fred and George were freaking out. They wanted a laugh. They wanted to dupe the headmaster. They certainly didn't want to hurt him. They really didn't think the day could get any worse when they saw an owl coming straight for them carrying a bright red envelope that began smoking. As soon as the owl released it in front of the twins, the howler opened up into the familiar voice of Mrs. Weasley.

"How dare you! You stupid, retarded, useless, wretched beings. Fred! George! What on earth were you thinking trying to scare a man better than halfway through his second century on this world! You could have killed him!"

With every word the twins were paling and stepping back in fright, but the howler just kept inching closer and closer and seemed to be screaming louder and louder.

"You know his heart has been stretched to its limits having to deal with Harry as much as he has! If I didn't know how utterly idiotic you two really are, I'd think you were trying to kill him!"

By this point the howler was barely a foot away, and each word was like a hot wind blowing on their face.

"I swear to Merlin I am so angry with you right now, I could just... ruggah... fliggah...jerking... dumbasses... ARRGGHHH!" It just let out an ear-piercing scream that forced the twins to clench their eyes shut from breeze before the whole thing just popped into a small fiery explosion. Left in it's wake was a floating golden ring.

The twins barely had a moment to realize what that meant when the joyful head of Albus Dumbledore poked through and smiled at them. "Happy Birthday!"

To their credit, they didn't faint, but the Weasley twins did collapse onto the floor clutching their hearts and completely out of breath.

Albus climbed his way through the rest of the enlarging golden ring and hopped onto the floor. He looked down at the twins, still pale and worried faces. "And Happy April Fools Day as well."

The rest of the student's laughed at resigned but grinning Weasley twins who seemed completely and totally relieved.

"Yes, yes," Albus assured the students and staff as he went back up to his seat at the Head Table. "Reports of my demise have been greatly exaggerated." He gleefully helped himself to the meal that he had missed out on earlier.

Harry and Minerva had also snuck their way back into the hall and witnessed much of the Weasley twins berating. Minerva shook her head at Albus' smile, while Harry took the seat on the other side of the Headmaster.

Harry sent out the trigger to the potion that had been ruminating in James' belly for just a short while now and sent a wink towards the Headmaster. Albus recognized their telepathic link was still open and mentally asked, "So will you tell me what muggle symptoms we should be expecting from Professor Prongs?"

Harry smiled mischievously and mentally replied, "Have you ever heard of a syndrome called Tourettes?"

Albus' eyes widened and another smile split across his face. He was listening down towards Professors Bessie and Prongs as they finished a discussion on baby names.

"I love you, honey," Lily told her husband.

James smiled and answered back, "And I love you too - CUNTICKINGCOCKSUCKINGSHITFUCKER-!" James gasped and threw his hand over his mouth.

"Excuse me," Lily asked with wide eyes.

James shook his head. "That wasn't -ASSMOTHERFUCKDICK- me. I swear I'm not -WHOREFACEDCOMEDUMPSTERBITCH- meaning to scream." James slapped both hands over his mouth at this point, as everyone in the hall was staring at him. Some of the younger Ravensclaws were writing down all the words they didn't recognize.

"Professor Prongs?" the Headmaster inquired looking over the top of his glasses. "If you are unable to maintain a civil tongue at the dining table I will be forced to ask you to leave."

James slowly removed his hands from his mouth and without even trying to say anything yelled out, "-GOATFUCKINGDONKEYRAPINGSHITEATER-" He slapped his hands over his mouth and let out a muffled eep.

Remus and Sirius were just looking at their friend incredulously.

Some more muffled curse words were trying to pour out of James' clamped shut mouth.

Remus finally recognizing the signs leaned forward and looked down the table at Harry. He looked completely impressed. "Did you give him... Tourettes?"

Harry's eyes were twinkling victoriously. "Who? Me?"

James just looked at his son and blurted out, "-COCKHUNGRYBALLEATING-"

Harry looked down at his watch and said, "Don't you have a class to teach soon?"

"Fuck!" James exclaimed.

Sirius pointed his finger, "Hey now! That one was you!"

Lily just listened to all the verbal diarrhea coming out of her husband's mouth and wondered how they could ever hope to raise a baby demon.

James whined. "Come on Harry! You can't - ASSFUCKSTARTBLOWME- leave me like this..."

Harry was tapping his chin. "Actually, I do believe I could... but I'm probably too nice for that."

"Change him back, Harry," his mother pleaded.

Harry shrugged. "All it takes is the magic words."

"-DICKLICKINGANUSFACE-" James blurted out frustrated.

Harry shook his head. "Those certainly aren't the magic words."

"Oh come on," Sirius whined. "You probably made it a parseltongue password, you big cheater."

Harry smiled and again shook his head negatively. "Nope. I made it obvious for you, especially considering the honor that's on the line."

Remus smiled and nodded. He said loudly, "I solemnly swear that I am up to no good."

Harry inclined his head towards Remus in agreement.

James jumped at the chance. "I solemnly swear - FUCKFACESHITTER- that I am up -DAMNCOCKEATER- to no good." James sighed happily and all was quiet for a moment. "-HELLWHORELICKER-" And he groaned in frustration.

Harry happily pointed out, "I believe you didn't quite get all the words out in order there."

“Harry is the best,” Remus replied before stopping and looking around confused. “Harry is the best!”

Sirius looked at Remus oddly, “You’re saying Prongs has to get out all of ‘I solemnly swear I am up to no good’ Harry is the best?” Sirius’ eyes bulged out. “Harry is the best? Harry... is the best.”

“Harry is the best!” Remus insisted.

Sirius grumbled back frustrated. “Harry is the best.”

Lily looked at Sirius and Remus oddly. “Did you guys just say I solemnly swear-”

“Harry is the best!” Remus interrupted.

“-FUCKSHITFUCKDICKFUCK-” James blurted out making no effort to stop himself.

“Harry is the best?” Sirius asked Remus.

Remus just shook his head.

James was waiting with his mouth open. As soon as he involuntarily spasmed and yelled, “-CHICKENFUCKINGCORNHOLE-”, he immediately tried to ramble out, “I solemnly swear I am up to – MOTHERSHITDAMMIT-” James groaned. “No good. – ASSLICKINGBUTTNOSE-”

“Harry is the best,” Remus reiterated.

All three elder Marauders just gave Harry the tired look of a broken man.

Remus held up his hands and said “Harry is the best.”

Sirius grumbled and nodded. “Harry is the best.”

James added, “We –COCKDICKSUCKFUCK- yield, give, surrender... -COMELICKINGCOWBOY- just stop this.”

Harry smiled at them and winked. "Mischief managed."

All three immediately felt the magic that had been welling inside them reach its conclusion. Sirius and Remus were shaking their heads. Sirius whined, "That was mean."

James smiled reluctantly at his son. "Cheeky fucker."

CHAPTER TWENTY

Yesterday there had been a surrender. A cessation to the prank war as the victor accepted his opponent's pleas to yield, thus officially ending the Marauder's Honor Challenge.

"I just meant for him to stop that stupid Tourettes thing," James whined. "I didn't mean to give up the whole war."

"Well you did," Lily stated plainly. "And frankly we were getting our asses kicked anyways. Pass the fruit salad, please?"

James reached across the table and handed his wife the fruit salad. He was heaping the eggs onto his own plate, as Remus and Sirius joined them at the Head Table. "Moony!" James called out. "Are you back again, or still here?"

Remus smiled and sat down. "I'm back again. Because I was thinking more and more about what happened yesterday. And I don't like the conclusions I'm reaching at all."

James grumbled in agreement. "It ended when I surrendered. I didn't even realize I was surrendering the Honor Challenge."

Remus raised an eyebrow, having not been bothered by that aspect. "Well, in that case you are an idiot. You take pranks, you sit through the embarrassment, but you never surrender unless you're beaten."

Lily stared at Remus, "We were beaten."

Remus nodded, "Yes, but I'm not sure how fairly we were defeated."

"Fairly?" Sirius asked. "It's pranks. What does fairness have to do with anything?"

Harry strolled in with Tonks as they were chatting quietly. Harry overheard the older Marauder's discussion as he walked up to his seat. "Oh no, is it time to start complaining about how I cheated already?"

Remus frowned at Harry. "I know that spell you used to make Padfoot and I stuck repeating the same phrase."

Harry nodded, "Yeah, you do."

"I taught you that spell!" Remus insisted.

Harry nodded and chuckled, "Yeah, you did."

"That spell only works when the person hit with it, accepts the spell," Remus explained to the others. "Because it's the magic on the receiver's end that keeps it going. The spell has no effect on muggles. Which means I had to be hit with the spell and my magic responded by not fighting the effects in the slightest and actually encouraging it!"

"Very good, Remus," Harry mockingly nodded. "I see you remember the spell that you taught me just fine."

Remus frowned and looked at Sirius. He looked back at Harry. "Neither I nor Padfoot ever accepted any spell like that from you. Nor do we remember anything where we might have. You've been using Imperious or mind control or some other rotten trick on us!"

Harry looked at Tonks and smiled. He turned back towards all the curious and angry faces. "I have, have I? Are you challenging my Honor again?"

"No," Remus answered a little too quickly. "Well no, I mean... dammit Harry, that's just not fair!"

Harry shook his head and smiled at them. "So I'm not allowed to do any rotten tricks on you guys? What sort of prank war was this?"

"Pranks are supposed to be on equal footings!" Sirius insisted. "In that you can't just go around kidnapping us, obviating us, or using war tactics that are highly illegal and dangerous."

Lily nodded. "Yeah! Only slightly illegal and mildly dangerous. No Unforgivables or really bad dark spells."

Harry sighed. "And simply because you cannot figure out how you got pranked, you automatically assume I must have been doing the really evil dark magics on you?"

Albus had just been relayed from Harry the tidbit of information that brought a wide smile to Harry's face. The Headmaster stood up and happily greeted the woman entering the Great Hall. "Madame Pomfrey!" Albus said loudly. "Welcome back, Poppy. I trust you took full advantage of your short vacation."

Remus, Sirius, James, and Lily's eyes all widened.

Poppy nodded. "Of course Headmaster, thank you. And thanks to you especially Miss Tonks for suggesting it and covering for me. I hadn't realized how much I needed a day off from this madhouse."

Tonks turned towards Sirius briefly and smiled. "Well, I figured since all my field training in rudimentary Healing from the Auror academy was wasting away, you could use a day off and I could make sure my skills are up to snuff."

"Yes well," Poppy huffed. "My Potions storeroom looks like you went through quite a bit. Nothing too much for you to handle, I hope?"

Tonks shook her head. "No problems. Just a whole lot of harmless pranks yesterday. Furry growths, hands glued to pants, people thinking they got turned into werewolves and other silly stuff like that." Tonks grinned brightly and mock whispered. "There was even one girl completely convinced she's got a demon baby growing in her."

Poppy laughed out loud at Tonks.

"With antlers!" Tonks added.

Poppy shook her head. "Oh dear. Yes, of course, it just happens to be April Fools Day, but there's an antlered demon baby in your womb. What are the odds it's discovered on this particular day?"

Lily and James were blushing and looking down at their plates.

Tonks turned towards Remus and Sirius, but continued talking to Poppy. "And Harry helped me remember quite a few of the diagnostic spells I forgot. He even whipped together a few Potions for me."

Poppy grinned and reached up to grab a hunk of Harry's cheek and shook it. "I knew there was a reason I gave you those extra lessons."

Harry's head bobbed back and forth from Madame Pomfrey's affectionate squeeze. "Yeah, there was. You said you were tired of putting 'Harry Dumpty' back together again."

Poppy furrowed her brow and just snapped, "Well you go on believing that if you like. I think the rest of us know the real reasons." Poppy turned around and marched right out of the Hall.

Harry looked over at the four ashamed older Marauders.

"Yes well..." Remus stammered avoiding Harry's eyes. "Shut up."

Harry laughed and went back to his breakfast.

Sirius turned to James. "Poppy! We always trust Poppy without even thinking about it. She never takes a day off."

Lily rolled her eyes. "Apparently not quite never."

James frowned. "Doesn't that violate some sort of healer-patient confidentiality agreement?"

Lily sighed and sat back. "Between who? Us and Tonks?"

"Miss Tonks!" Albus scolded. "If you've been abusing your patients' privacy to your own end, I'm going to have no choice but to reprimand you."

Tonks just looked at the Headmaster with a raised eyebrow.

Albus grinned, "Perhaps I should suspend both you and Professor Potter for this evening and force you to go out and dine at the school's expense?"

Tonks smiled, "That I could handle, Headmaster, but you do know Harry and I aren't dating anymore, right?"

Albus was slightly shocked to hear this. "You're not? What happened?"

Harry grinned brightly, "With all of your resources Albus, you mean to tell me that you managed to fall behind on the events of my private life? Now I know I asked all my friends to keep quiet about this, but I assumed you would have picked up on it from someone."

"Actually, Harry," Lily replied. "We decided it safest to just not think about it or discuss it. Ever."

"What happened?" Albus asked with a touch of worry.

Harry sighed and sat back. "It came to my attention that dating many different girls was taxing on their friendships with each other as well as their friendships with me. So I've broken it off with all of them officially to try and pursue a more meaningful relationship with a single individual."

"Oh really? Who's the lucky one?" Albus asked as he was unfortunately going for his juice.

Harry waited until the old man was drinking before sighing melodramatically and announcing like a lovestruck schoolgirl, "Nicholas."

As expected, Albus began choking for just a moment before snorting so hard the orange juice stung his nostrils on the way out. Albus hurriedly slapped a napkin over his face, as he was quite a sickening looking mess, and still snorting out laughter.

Harry began patting Albus on the back, "You okay there, old man?"

Albus was still tittering as he managed to get out, "Ni- Nicholas, eh? Harry, you're going to make a horrible homosexual. You hate dancing, your room is always messy, you have no fashion sense. You don't even wear bright colors!"

"Well, I can learn," Harry defended. "That's what it's all about, right? Learning together? I mean we're going to take things real slow. We already have proven that we make great partners in research. Only time will tell, if we make great partners," Harry sighed dreamily, "in love."

This time it was Tonks caught unprepared shooting juice out her nose. Harry sat back and looked at his father, mother, and godfather across from him. He wasn't sure why he was dreading this conversation so much, but he was certainly apprehensive. "Please sit down. This may take a little while."

James smiled a little and asked the inevitable question, "We're not going to have to turn our head and cough, are we?"

Harry gave his dad a very odd look that was interpreted as a no.

Lily ignored her husband and asked the next most inevitable question, "Time for us to go?"

Harry shook his head. "Not just yet if you don't mind. Albus would like you guys to finish up the school year here, for the students' sake, and I assumed you guys would be fine with that. I have a couple other things I would like to prepare before we... go for the switcheroo. And the end of the school year's only another six weeks away. I figure we can put it off a week or two after that in case there was anything you wanted to do or places to go."

"So how's this going to work?" Lily asked her son.

Harry took a deep breath. "We've determined the only logical and possible course of action for fixing this, and we're going to need you to do some things you may not want to."

Lily winced. "I sort of didn't expect dealing with souls and bodies would be all peaches and cream. So what is so bad about this?"

Harry looked them all straight in the eye and said with a completely straight face, "The first step is each of you is going to have to strangle a baby with your bare hands."

"What?" James couldn't believe his ears.

Harry snickered. "Sorry... just lightening the mood a little. It was getting tense in here."

Sirius laughed out loud. "Only you Harry would use baby killing as a pick-me-up."

"Not true," Harry said with a shake of his finger. "You would too."

Sirius grinned and agreed with that.

"No, there will be no killing of any kind, and it shouldn't have any adverse affects on you guys, other than the change of scenery," Harry assured them. "We're going to be calling souls back into the Dursleys' bodies, after we safely extract your souls from them. The problem with that is any attempt to pull their souls back in, is probably going to be trying to pull in yours too. Considering your souls have been stuck in Dursley suits, it stands to reason the two have established a connection."

"Ahh," Sirius understood. "Can I assume you have a better solution than merely destroying our souls?"

"I knew you'd be a stickler about that one Padfoot," Harry mock sighed. "So, unfortunately we immediately ruled out every scenario involving adverse affects on your souls or the Dursleys' souls or bodies." Harry shrugged. "I was half-hoping we wouldn't come up with anything but we have."

Harry decided to skim over a few of the more illegal steps and explained, "The gist of it is take your souls out, keep a firm hold on them, open a portal to the other side, send out the come-home call

from the bodies. And while yours are being restrained, theirs will hopefully come from wherever they are, back into the bodies.”

“You make it sound so simple,” James snickered. “And just how many acts of illegal dark arts are hidden in those words?”

“If I were a betting man I’d say more than one and less than a hundred,” Harry replied before doing a little math in his head. “Actually let’s say less than a thousand to be on the safe side.”

James thought this was beginning to sound fun.

“The first tricky part is that we don’t have any cages or capture devices we can bind your souls to that would be strong enough. We do have receptacles that can hold your soul, but they won’t help you resist the call back into the Dursleys’ bodies.”

Lily nodded as though Harry was giving her instructions on how to bake a cake, and she was mentally taking notes.

Harry licked his lips. “Bob says he can do that though.”

“Bob?” James asked.

Harry nodded. “Is going to have to kiss you and to withdraw your souls from the Dursleys’ bodies. You will be contained inside him, while we call the souls to their respective bodies. There is a chance you may be able to feel the call, you may not.”

“So this is like a firecall but with less fire and more brimstone?” Sirius asked.

“You’re a dork, Padfoot.” Lily explained before turning to Harry, “So far you’ve only told us the plan. You said you had something to ask us?”

Harry nodded. “The question is what to do with your souls, after we’ve pulled the Dursleys back. Because if we can’t get to them, then we got a real good shot at being able to just put you back into their bodies, which I’m hoping would be affable with all of you. Otherwise,

assuming success, you have two options for what we do after we've reassembled our dear sweet relatives."

"We don't have to stay in Bob?" James perked up.

Harry smiled and shook his head. "Oh heavens no, that's just to keep you from getting sucked back into their bodies. In your case, when Bob coughs your souls back up, they will either leave the mortal world for good like they probably should have in the first place or—"

"What do you mean should have in the first place?" Lily asked.

Harry paused and explained, "I don't think any of you three ever moved on, because your souls were waiting for this past year to happen, for me to accidentally pull you back into the Dursleys' bodies." Harry shrugged. "I'm not sure exactly what it was that came out of Voldemort's wand at his resurrection, so it is possible you did move on and just lost the memory of your afterlife when you rejoined the mortal world or maybe that was an echo of you, or... no idea. Mind you, there still are a lot of unknowns, but from everything we can tell, I shouldn't have been able to pull you guys into these bodies because you shouldn't have been reachable. For some reason your souls had not moved on all the way or came back or got a reprieve from eternity. The only reason for that we have been able to come up with was... so that you would exist for me to pull you here."

"Oh no," Sirius groaned clutching his head. "I think I sprained my brain."

Harry flashed his mum a cheeky grin and winked, while he retorted, "I think that's assuming too much about the materials in that head of yours."

Lily narrowed her eyes remembering her words in the Infirmary.

"Oi! That was a private conversation you big hidden cheater," Sirius growled. His face shifted quickly into a smile. "Was that stuff you just said very important because you lost me when you said... hmm... well, when you were talking at any rate."

Harry smiled at his godfather's gift for observation. "No, not very important."

Lily looked at her husband and Sirius' matching confused expressions. "Umm... the question Harry?"

"Right," Harry nodded trying to get back on track. "As I said we have receptacles that can hold your soul, and if you would rather not move on, there is a way you could stay here."

"I want to stay!" Sirius erupted.

"Hang on a sec," Harry warned him. "It's not that easy. These receptacles are actually illegal dark artifacts, because they're modified from the process that portraits are made, and they're in fact a prison and way to enslave a soul."

"What do you mean?" James asked.

"Well, what do you know about standard wizarding portraits?" Harry asked.

James nodded. "It's like a temporary duplicate of your existence. They don't last forever and the older they get, the less they remember until eventually they stop moving."

Harry agreed and explained. "These are very similar to that, except they're not a temporary duplicate. This is your soul, this is you, and it's likely you will last forever. And as I would be the one doing it, you would officially be subservient to me. The three we managed to locate contained the wives of a long-dead pharaoh. Apparently after he tired of a wife, he would encase her soul and keep it as a pet. They told us what we do know about these artifacts in exchange for releasing them. So now after millennia of being trapped they've finally moved on."

"But you were able to pull them out and allow them to move on?" Lily asked.

Harry nodded. "Yeah, we were, but only because we had the unique position of dementor cooperation and the right people who knew how to do this. If it weren't for the fortunate circumstances, it's likely they would have spent eternity as ensouled paintings."

"So we can just take this way to stay for now, and make sure there's a way for us to move on later then, right?"

Harry shrugged. "We'll definitely try, but there's a risk that if something happens to the people involved or some other component gets involved, then you may end up forever locked here. Ghosts usually stick around because they have something unfinished and leave eventually. You'd be in it for the long haul. Basically what it boils down to is we're sort of locking you in a cell that requires a number of people working together as a key. If any part of it is gone or broken, you could spend a whole lot of time in that cell."

"I'm up for it," Sirius says. "I mean I'd be leaving you an imprint for a portrait anyway, but this way it sounds like we get to hang around sort of too, right?"

Harry shook his head. "I don't want you to give me answers now. You don't have to decide any time soon. But I would like you to consider the risk, because this is your eternal everlasting soul we're talking about." Harry smirked. "Not to mention you'd be mine to command as Master of the paintings."

"Voluntary slavery of the soul or judgment and eternal damnation, rewards, or whatever else is out there, right?" James asked.

Harry nodded. "Yup."

Lily thought about it and asked, "Is it impossible to put us into other bodies? Or to fashion us new bodies?"

Harry cringed. "Not impossible, I don't think. But to get one person back into their own rightful body requires a sacrifice. Using another body would mean the loss of whomever's body that is, not to mention trying to force you into a body that's not yours would likely require a whole lot more sacrifice."

“By sacrifice, you mean a human?” James clarified. “Or will a Slytherin work?”

Harry chuckled slightly. “I’ve been avoiding defining it, because we’re pretty sure it requires at least a human life. This instance with you guys here is a complete anomaly. In this case, it took only fat from Dudley’s body. We’ve been experimenting some with fat and haven’t been able to replicate anything remotely similar. I’m pretty sure that Dudley lost about half his fat to bring you guys here. And my instincts are telling me that he is supposed to lose the other half of his fat to fix this and bring them back.”

“Experimenting with fat?” Lily asked, readying herself to defend her bovine brethren.

Harry waved her off. “Nothing all too morally wrong. No cows, deer, or dogs.”

“Hey!” James insisted. “I’m a stag not a deer.”

“Alright, you’re a stag. Not a deer.” Harry admitted with a roll of his eyes. He seemed to consider it a moment and decided, “Although that just makes you sound like a chauvinistic deer. As I was saying, I’m just saving Hagrid the trouble of hunting for animals to feed the thestrals and hippogriffs. And providing him with some especially lean ferret and weasel meat. Personally I think the way we treat them is a bit more humane than some of Hagrid’s methods.”

James, having helped the large Care of Magical Creatures Professor in the past, nodded. “Swinging them by the tail into a tree isn’t exactly WETMA approved.”

“Wet ma?” Sirius asked.

James nodded, “Wizardkind for the Ethical Treatment of Magical Animals.”

Sirius frowned. “But those aren’t even magical animals.”

Lily shook her head. "It's not like WETMA cares about details like that."

"Maybe not but," James continued with a wide grin. "They've got some smoking hot witches supporting them."

Lily rolled her eyes at her husband's misguided interest. "Anyways, Harry. So what happens if the Dursleys don't answer the call?"

Harry grinned back at his Mum hopefully. "Well, if there's no answer from them, then we've got three living, working bodies that your souls seem to approve of. Bob won't have to hold on to you, and we've got a really fat Vernon who could drop a hundred plus pounds. No idea if it will work, but it is possible that if Dudley's fat can do all this, Vernon's could too. Which frankly isn't all that bad a prospect in my opinion."

James and Lily were nodding, conflicted on whether they should be hoping to live in mortal human bodies, or that their son won't have completely obliterated their other relatives' souls.

Sirius grumbled loudly. "Dammit! Why can't we be more evil and just leave the Dursleys' to rot?"

"I ask myself that question all the time," Harry sighed.

Lily pouted. "Evil's so much cooler too."

James nodded at the thought of Evil. "All that sexy leather." He never even saw the shoe coming.

Harry had been arranging several things and cleared them with Albus and Hogwarts. Surprisingly, Hogwarts was the more apprehensive one, but seeing how James and Lily were still spending their time training towards Masteries, she eventually agreed. Though Harry had the feeling she was just trying to show him who is boss, and was always going to agree.

Harry spent some time prepping the Chamber of Secrets for what was unofficially being called The Fix. Ideally this would have been done with some items belonging to the Dursleys and actually at Privet

Drive. But unfortunately, that place was a barren, lifeless wasteland and everything that had been there was still smoldering char. Hence the Chamber was the next best option for being away from everyone, with the bonus of Hogwarts' protection. And given the rumors about Salazar this probably wasn't the first time the more nefarious arts were done down there. At the leaving feast, Albus announced that Professors Prongs, Padfoot, and Bessie would not be returning next year, and they all received standing ovations and cheers. Lily even cried, which Harry and Sirius mocked her greatly for. James laughed at her and got hit, which Harry and Sirius mocked him greatly for.

As the last of the students, climbed into the carriages and were headed off towards the Hogwarts Express, James turned to Harry, "How the hell did you keep getting the best of us anyway?"

Harry grinned at his Dad's sudden interest. "Were you waiting for all my spies among the students to leave before asking that?"

James groaned. "Alright, not the students then, you cheeky bugger."

Sirius and Lily followed the pair as they all walked back to the DADA office, interested in this conversation as well.

"Didn't Nicholas warn you that I had a lot of hidden allies?" Harry asked mysteriously.

James, Sirius, and Lily were looking on expectantly.

Harry whistled a loud staccato sound and waited for a moment.

Sirius pointed down, "Hey it's that kitten that kept getting disillusioned!"

Harry just looked at them incredulously. "You discovered a disillusioned kitten, and didn't find that just a little suspicious?"

James frowned. "Well... I mean... it's a kitten."

"Says the deer," Harry retorted, before loudly calling out, "Secret Agent Overlook, report!"

The little kitten popped into the well known youngster Simon. He snapped off a salute. "My cover has been compromised now, sir."

James, Sirius, and Lily remembered how often they ran into the kitten and wondered how many times they hadn't noticed he was around.

"No need to worry. Your mission is complete."

"Really?" Simon asked with wide eyes.

"Affirmative, Agent Overlook," Harry insisted. "But I will deny any and all involvement if your mother finds out."

"She'll never find out, sir!" Simon insisted and snapped another salute.

"Tell me, Agent. How is it that you managed to maintain cover in spite of being found?"

Simon smiled explained. "They thought a student was trying to hide his roommate's pet, sir. They felt sorry for me and rubbed my belly repeatedly." Simon paused and frowned. "It tingled, sir."

Harry laughed and wondered if Minnie needed to have a conversation with Simon. "I'll have your bounty within a week. Dismissed, Agent Overlook. Good work."

Simon popped back into his kitten form and scampered away.

Lily shook her head. "I was petting Simon all the time. Never even considered it was an animagus. And you!" Lily said turning back to Harry. "Bribing a ten year old!"

"He's almost eleven," Harry feebly argued. "Okay, that's really not a very good reason. But I needed an excuse to buy him a broom since he's starts Hogwarts next year. Although I must say he took his work a lot more seriously after you had Wizard's Workout print a retraction."

"What? Why? That was your stuff I was retracting!" James insisted.

Harry nodded. "Yup, but you took back just about everything you had been quoted as saying or liking. Except you did not retract anything about what you had said was your favorite food."

James turned to Sirius. "What did it say my favorite food was?"

Sirius and Lily shrugged, while Harry let out a masculine giggle, "Crispy Kitten Nuggets."

James shook his head as Sirius unconsciously licked his lips. "So that's it? Just some secret spies around?"

"Having complete access to your rooms helped too," Harry pointed out as they arrived in the office. Harry silenced the door and put up some privacy and locking charms for good measure.

"What!" Sirius exclaimed in surprise. "We worked for days on those wards! And you never could have touched them without triggering an alarm to us."

Harry sat back in his chair and raised his two hands. A massive stone statue of Harry grew out of the ground behind him.

James pointed, "We were detecting for that stone manipulation stuff!"

Harry shook his head. "Not the stone stuff. Hogwarts. You tied all of your wards into Hogwarts, which for many purposes including this one, is just an extension of me."

"Why didn't you do more to us then?" Sirius asked. "We were completely vulnerable."

"Exactly. Why give up that advantage for a prank?" Harry said. "You won't try to make new wards while you think your old ones are working."

"So is Hogwarts your... familiar?" Lily asked unsure of what to call it. The walls of the office began to shake slightly.

Harry replied negatively. "Nope, she's very clear on this point. I am her familiar. She's not mine, whatever difference that distinction makes."

James frowned. "That's so unfair, being the castle's familiar. We never had a chance on your home turf."

Harry grinned, "You're right. You didn't."

"Don't look so smug," Sirius insisted. "Nicholas got a few good ones in on you."

Harry frowned and tapped his chin. "You guys don't have anything going on, right now, do you?"

Sirius shook his head. "My schedule's open until you thrust me into an ensouled painting."

Harry nodded at the slight change of subject. "You sure you want to do that?"

Lily spoke up, "Harry, there really wasn't even much debate in it for us. I mean not to add to your guilt complex or anything, but the last thing we all remembered before being freakishly reborn, was giving all we could to try and save you. It's not like we were unfairly struck down or were in the wrong place at the wrong time. All three of us actively gave our lives in hopes of protecting you."

"I know," Harry winced a bit. "That's why I don't want to see you give up your souls for me too."

James shrugged. "Personally, I doubt the afterlife is half as fun as seeing the shit you keep getting into and coming up with."

Sirius nodded. "And even just keeping our souls around, I wouldn't be surprised if a few years down the road, you get sick of us whining and figure out a way to give us a body. No pressure or anything." Sirius flashed a big grin.

Harry grumbled at the ebullience of his godfather.

James nodded and added, "To be honest, I've been getting antsy to just get this over with. Not knowing how it's going to turn out has been giving me anxiety for weeks. And I've been screwing your mother as much as I possibly can. And every once in a while I remember I'm in Vernon's body. Then I think about the idea that Vernon's body is screwing your mother. Then I remember that your mother is in Petunia's body. And that I'm screwing Petunia's body. Then I usually throw up for a bit, before asking your mother if she wants to screw some more."

Lily nodded. "We're both getting tired of sex, but knowing we may not be able to ever again means we just keep doing it. In the Astronomy Tower, in the Great Hall, the owlery, the kitchens, the Headmaster's Office, the Gryffindor Common Room, during the History of Magic OWL, gillyweed and underwater in the Lake, protection charms and sticking charms to the branches on the Whomping Willow, the buttplug episode on Snivelly's desk,-"

"Dammit woman, how many times do I have to tell you?" James interrupted. "Those were anal beads, not a buttplug. And don't worry Harry, we put plastic down for that one."

Lily was going to continue if not for the look of horror on Harry's face. "I don't think he was all that worried, honey."

James noticed it too. "Oh. Sorry 'bout that."

"Not as much as I am," Harry mumbled before shaking himself free of those thoughts. "So what are you saying? You're all three completely certain you want to become ensouled paintings? And you're ready now?" Harry asked them.

"Ending up with a body we can keep would be an okay consolation prize, but... yeah," Lily added.

Sirius shrugged. "I'm not sure this is the sort of thing you can ever be ready for... but sooner is starting to sound better than later."

Harry nodded and conceded. "Well the Chamber of Secrets is prepped and ready whenever we are, but I'd like to tell you all a few things first."

Lily sniffled and ran over to her son. "Oh Harry, I love you too!"

Harry snickered and hugged her back. "Thanks Mum, and I do love you, but that wasn't what I meant."

Lily wiped her eyes and went back to her chair. "Sorry. I've just been a bit emotional lately."

"You're a woman," James explained, "It's expected."

"And you're a deer, dear." Lily snapped back.

Harry wondered why his dad said these things aloud. True, every rational guy accepts them as fact, but you just don't freely admit that to the enemy. "Anyways... I kind of figured you guys would all jump at the paintings, so we've even come up with a few cool ways to improve on them."

"Oh yeah?" Sirius asked. "Clothing optional?"

Harry feared for the children. "I suppose that is one possibility but-"

James and Lily locked eyes. James said, "We can have wall sex! It'll be just like floo sex but this way we can both see each other!"

"Oh lord," Harry interrupted. "Please. I don't need to know these things. And if you'd let me finish you'd realize that you probably can have all the sex you want, in all sorts of places, ideally out of view. And yes, Sirius you could get some action too."

Sirius waggled his eyebrows. "How bout it, Lils?"

"Stop!" Harry yelled. "I've pictured my mum having sex too many times already today! No more!"

Lily was biting her tongue and finally had to ask. "For future reference, how many times is an acceptable amount?"

Harry certainly pulled no punches leveling his Mum one of those pissed off powerful wizard stares. He eyed Sirius and James when he saw how much this affected them.

James, Sirius, and Lily all shut up and sat back quietly. Sirius mumbled, "A little respect for a dying man would be nice..."

"Oh stuff it, Padfoot, and let me finish." Harry glared at them all. "Hogwarts is willing to incorporate you here, in exchange for you doing your part to help out when it's needed. Your portraits will be in your classrooms: Dad in Transfiguration, Mum in Charms, and Sirius in the DADA classroom. You can be alternate assistant professors or substitutes if needed, you can alert everyone when there are problems and you will have full access to hop into all the other paintings as you like!"

Sirius turned to James, "Is the Gryffindor guardian seeing anyone?"

"The Fat Lady?" James asked in disbelief.

Sirius shrugged. "I dig fat chicks every once in a while."

Harry closed his eyes for a moment to block out their voices. "As I was saying, you will be able to move around like the other portraits, but you will also be able to do more than any of the other portraits. More than likely, you will be able to do magic within the paintings, but not outside of them."

"Outside of them?" Lily asked.

Harry nodded. "As in your spells won't leave the canvas. And with a little luck, you very possibly will be able to exit the paintings as a spectral ghost of sorts and then hop into other paintings that way."

"Oooo," Sirius grinned. "Forget fat chicks. There's the lonely moaner out there. Although Myrtle does seem more the screamer type..."

Harry tried to ignore him. "Exactly how much and what you will be capable of, we won't know until it happens. But you are bound to be more than simple paintings given Hogwarts magical environment and your actual souls being involved."

"I wonder if the Fat Friar is sick of his job," Sirius mused. "I'd like to be the Hufflepuff ghost for sure."

"Most of it we'll just figure out as we go," Harry continued pretending he wasn't being interrupted. "And I happen to know there's a waiting list over a couple centuries old for becoming a Hogwarts House ghost. It's not a position that opens very often."

"Fiddlesticks," Sirius groaned.

Harry sighed and made sure he had their eyes all focused on him. "I'd like to talk about Nicholas for a while too."

"Listen Harry," James replied. "I mean... if you're a doughnut-hole puncher at heart, then that's who you are. Or if you just need to figure out if you're really a doughnut-hole puncher, then I want you to figure that out. But frankly... the age difference squicks me a bit." James leaned forward conspiratorially. "And Ginny told me, according to Hermione, Nicholas is really hairy."

"He's really Harry?" Harry asked back with a grin. "Believe it or not, I already knew that. But that's not exactly why I wanted to talk about him."

Lily shrugged. "If you're asking if we approve, it's a bit weird, but whatever makes you happy, sweetie. He is a kind man, and sometimes seems like the only one around who challenges you. If your one-eyed purple people eater likes to hunt the ancient male brown-eye, then I'm happy for you."

Harry just laughed. "Sirius, would you like to add anything especially embarrassing before I'm allowed to speak my piece?"

Sirius shook his head. "Naw, I'm sure I'll have plenty of opportunities to jump in and make an ass of myself."

"You can usually pull that off even when you don't have the opportunity," Harry replied. "Very well. I suppose I should start in the fourteenth century."

"Shit, this is a long story," James replied.

"And it gets longer with every interruption," a disgruntled Harry pointed out.

Sirius looked at his watch. "Oh? Are we running late for our murders?"

Before Harry could snap back, Sirius raised a calming hand, "Sorry, sorry. Couldn't help myself. I know I have problems." Sirius paused for a beat. "But not for much longer."

"Moving on," Harry said. "In the fourteenth century-"

"Actually Harry, you just started over," James said. "You haven't moved on." James recognized that look and also blurted out, "Sorry."

Harry snapped his fingers twice and James and Sirius found themselves mouthless.

Sirius started freaking out.

Harry rolled his eyes and said, "Breathe through your nose."

Sirius inhaled and exhaled deeply and calmed down. Lily just smiled showing off the pearly whites in her mouth.

"Moving on, to the beginning, again," Harry snarked out. "In the fourteenth century, there was a muggle-born wizard named Markus James who was apprenticing to a Master Alchemist."

Lily frowned. "But back then they wouldn't..." She stopped at the glare her son was giving her. "I'm sorry. I'll be quiet. Promise." She pretended to zip her mouth shut and sat up waiting obediently.

Harry's patience was being tried. "Unfortunately, when his heritage was revealed, the Master he had been working with was forced to terminate the apprenticeship. This angered and frustrated Markus. So he continued studying the art of Alchemy on his own, and created a new identity, a completely fictional pureblood wizard. He named him Nicholas Flamel. Now all the work he had been doing as Nicholas Flamel was validated and accepted throughout the magical community. His skills as dueler and warrior of the light quickly outshone all of peers. Dark wizards fell to him, and his research was nearly unparalleled. For nearly a century, he was an icon and hero to the light. As he aged, and his skills began to deteriorate he realized he was still winning battles merely on his name. It was then that he came up with a brilliant solution. He took on an apprentice of his own under the guise of Nicholas Flamel. He came out with his greatest creation, the logical explanation for Nicholas Flamel's immortality, and arguably the pinnacle of Alchemy: the Philosopher's Stone."

All three of them were staring at Harry in shock and surprise.

Harry did so enjoy telling this story. "In truth, it was nothing more than a very pretty rock. But the name Nicholas Flamel became synonymous with power, skill, and brilliance. He passed on the torch and the name Nicholas Flamel to his apprentice, when he felt he was ready. Each time it was one of the most brilliant or powerful wizards who would be handed the mantle. He was a hero, and for centuries and centuries this continued. By maintaining the name of Nicholas Flamel, there was always a leader for the light. An immortal icon the wizarding world believed in. His mere existence and presence thwarted many potential uprisings and Dark Lords. Each time, as the man behind the mask of Nicholas Flamel got older, he would eventually find a new person to take over the name and continue the legacy."

Harry paused to see if they were connecting the dots yet. "Then in the late nineteenth century, one man who had been Nicholas for barely a decade saw the rise of a truly brilliant wizard. Right away he could see this man was going to be the hero and leader of the wizarding world for a long time even more so than he could be. He approached him, and discovered the young man had a desire to make his own name in the world. Thus when he spurned the opportunity to be the

next Nicholas Flamel, the knowledge of the secret was obliterated and kept from him. Seeing an opportunity, Nicholas did help the young man to greatness, when they worked together on discovering the twelve uses of Dragon's Blood."

Harry smiled. "And so it was for much of the twentieth century, the name Nicholas Flamel was heard less and less, and Albus Dumbledore was the icon of the light. If it weren't for Albus, I suspect all of you would have been looking up to Nicholas as the brilliant wise old man he appeared to be."

Lily, the only one capable of speaking, asked what Sirius and James were thinking. "Do you mean..."

Harry nodded. "Nicholas could see he wouldn't be able to keep up with Albus. He helped him where he could with Grindelwald, and tried to stay out of his way when Voldemort rose to power. He was still waiting for the next person he was going to approach as he was over 170 years old and knew he didn't have too much longer. He had an intuition that he trusted telling him to wait until a suitable candidate arose to pick up where Albus would leave off."

Sirius and James were frantically pointing at their mouths. Harry obliged them with a wave of his hand.

Sirius' eyes shone with amazement. "Do you mean to tell us that you're training to become the next Nicholas Flamel?"

Harry stopped and looked at them all. They were all thinking this exact same thing apparently. Harry just laughed at them and saw the confusion on their faces. Harry's eyes twinkled and he metamorphed himself into his other most recognizable appearance. "I mean, Mr. Black, that I have been Nicholas Flamel for over six years now."

All three of their jaws dropped open and their heads looked like they were trying to spit out their eyeballs.

"You were on my team!" James yelled out.

Harry shrugged. "You picked me." He shifted back into his Harry Potter appearance.

"No wonder you were the only one who could prank Harry," Sirius insisted. "Err... I mean you... yourself. Oh brain," he finished grabbing at his head.

Lily let out a loud breath and clutched her heart. "Oh thank Merlin."

James curiously turned to his relieved looking wife.

Lily smiled brightly at Harry and cheered, "You're not gay at all!"

James and Sirius slapped their foreheads, turned to each other and said, "Ohhh."

Harry rolled his eyes. "Not in the classical sense, nope."

"Classical?" Lily asked.

Harry shrugged. "Ancient Greeks?"

Lily nodded. "Goodness Harry. That's a pretty damn big secret."

Harry nodded. "Yup, and while it is my secret to tell, I also kind of have to keep it a secret for the memory of all the past Nicholas Flamels. Everyone who knows it has been put under a strict secrecy charm, but I figured since you're all going to be enslaving your souls to me shortly, that charm would be a bit redundant."

"Wait," James asked. "So who does know?"

Harry smiled. "This list may look familiar: Albus, Hermione, Tonks, Severus, and Draco."

Sirius grumbled. "Your whole flipping team knew you had a secret agent on our side."

"I certainly didn't pick them for their pranking skills," Harry agreed.

"So does Bob know?" Lily asked.

Harry nodded. "Yup, Bob was actually the first to know before any of them. When I met Bob, we sort of hit it off. Somehow we thought it would be hilarious to become blood brothers."

Sirius snorted.

Harry nodded. "Exactly. That's why I liked the idea so much. But neither Bob nor I had any clue what the hell would happen. This was while I was still training with Wesley on becoming Nicholas Flamel."

James' mind was blank for a moment before he remembered where he had heard that name. "Wesley who built that time room and gave you your own island... was the Nicholas Flamel before you. That makes a lot of sense now."

"Yeah, actually that island has been with the Flamels for several centuries now. Though the time room was Wesley's creation because he knew I didn't have a lot of time to take the name from him, as well as schedule in fighting the Death Eaters and hunting down Voldemort."

"Damn you were busy," Sirius said with wide eyes.

Harry nodded. "Yup, and seventh year I was both going to classes and teaching DADA." Harry smiled brightly. "I got the best grades in my class."

"Teacher's pet," Sirius complained.

"Yeah, back to what I was saying, was that I took a sample of Bob's blood to Wesley to check it out and see if we could become blood brothers. He went bonkers over the stuff as he began to realize how powerful it was. We did become blood brothers once Wes said it would be safe. During my seventh year, Wesley was working on breaking down the blood, figuring out everything he could on the make-up of dementors, and theorizing their history, since Bob doesn't remember much other than a lot of naps. And Wes was also making

sure I wasn't completely crumbling under the pressure of being Nicholas Flamel."

"Well I hope Albus at least was helping you out some," Lily stated.

Harry shook his head. "It was only about two years ago that Albus and Hermione found out about Nicholas. Just a little over one that Severus and Draco did. Tonks did shortly after that. With all the time travel I was doing, those two years leading up to Voldemort's defeat took me a good five years."

Sirius, Lily, and James all struggled to even comprehend that.

"I decided I'd earned a vacation by that point. Took it pretty easy for the next year or so after that."

Sirius frowned a bit in thought. "How come you never told Moony? Or anyone else?"

Harry shrugged. "No need for them to know. Once I finish up the Dementor Blood stuff, I think both Harry and Nicholas are going to try and fade into the background as much as possible. And the fewer people that know about Nicholas the better. Because I really do believe it's not just my secret to tell. If all the ones before me managed to keep it secret for over six centuries now, then I'd better not ruin the work they've all put into him."

Lily nodded. "That makes sense. Though I'm surprised you told Severus and Draco."

Harry shrugged. "I'm the Master of their old Dark Marks. Severus figured it out when I messed up, and Draco's his apprentice and was with him at the time. I know they can't betray me and frankly Slytherins are probably the best at keeping secrets anyway."

James frowned but didn't disagree.

Lily sighed, still thinking about the whole situation. "Wow."

Sirius nodded. "Yeah... wow."

Harry smiled. "And now you know my biggest secret."

James, Lily, and Sirius were still absorbing this news and just sat there quietly.

"If you're all ready for this though, I'd suggest we invite everyone you want to dinner, say your goodbyes... of a sort, and we can give it a shot later tonight."

"Moony's already coming," Sirius explained. "He's the only one I'm all that concerned with that's not at Hogwarts anyway."

"Same here," James nodded, "Sounds good."

Lily shrugged not really even considering it a goodbye, just a procedure.

"I'm going to miss you so much..."

"There, there," Albus soothed. "You're not going anywhere. Even if something happens, you'll live on in our hearts."

"I know. It's just... just... Oh Minnie! I'm going to miss you so much!" Minerva could only gulp nervously as she was engulfed in a tight hug.

"Knock it off, Padfoot!" Lily scolded.

Minerva was leaning back, "Seriously, Mr. Black. Get a hold of yourself."

Sirius sniffled again and wiped the tears from his eyes. "Filius!"

"Padfoot!" the Charms professor called back and embraced in a hug. Sirius picked the little guy up off the ground and spun them both around in circles.

Remus looked at the overly emotional man. "He's always been a pussy."

“Oi!” Sirius exclaimed unceremoniously dropping the tiny Professor Flitwick. “You know how I feel about being called anything catty!”

“Remus?” Lily asked innocently. “Since this may be my last opportunity, can you lay down on the floor for me?”

“What?” Remus questioned in the face of such an odd request.

“Just do it,” Lily pleaded before turning on her sweet, kind eyes. “Please?”

Remus sighed and sat down on the floor.

Lily got up and began walking to the other side of the room. “Lay down sweetie. Pretty pretty please.”

Remus reluctantly did as asked, despite fearing the absurdity of it all.

Lily began running straight towards the laying down Remus, and just a few steps before him popped in mid-air into her animagus form. She had enough momentum to maintain a gallop as she leapt into the air. Remus’ eyes were wide in fear that the massive heifer was going to crush his ribcage, crash landing onto him. She managed to successfully clear him and fell to the ground, popping back into her natural form as she slid across the floor.

Harry just groaned out loud. “I cannot believe you just did that.”

“What am I missing?” Minerva asked as Albus also groaned, and Remus was clutching his heart.

Lily felt no shame and shrugged. “I had to do it. It was inevitable.”

“Why would you do that?” the still scared Remus said as he dusted himself off.

Lily grinned way too brightly. “The cow jumped over the Moony!”

Everyone in the room who hadn’t been groaning certainly groaned now. James mumbled out, “I want a divorce.”

“Sorry Remus,” Lily said though she clearly didn’t mean it. “Couldn’t help myself. Thanks for being a sport though.”

“I’ll be sure to think of you,” Remus smiled, “Every time I get a burger.”

“That’s the spirit,” Lily replied.

Another lull in the after-dinner conversation clinched it for James, who spoke up, “I think it’s time. Moony, come over here and give me a hug.”

“Don’t worry Prongs,” Remus said as he obliged his friend. “You’ve got Harry running this show. I mean, what could possibly go wrong?”

James, Lily, and Sirius got a little bit uncomfortable when everyone else at the table simultaneously burst into laughter. Their discomfort wasn’t eased any to see Harry laughing the loudest and wiping tears from his eyes. “Good one, Moony.”

While no one else knew too many details, they all knew there was a risk it could be good-bye, or perhaps good-bye to an average-sized humanoid body, so it was hugs all around the room. Surprisingly only Sirius grabbed anyone inappropriately, and even then Minerva didn’t seem to mind it so much. No one else knew exactly what was going to happen, but Remus was going to wait in the Headmaster’s office with him. Drinking firewhiskey, like family members waiting for the doctor to come back from surgery.

Harry grabbed hold of his father, mother, and godfather and popped them all down into the Chamber of Secrets.

Bob was there waiting patiently, and skimming through the latest Witches Weekly. “We all ready to pervert the laws of nature some more?”

“I know I am!” Sirius cheered.

Harry nodded and double-checked everything. He had the Polyjuice counter potions, he had the potions geared to pull their souls from Bob. The dark arts soul portraits were all empty and shiny. The blood mixture for the sacrifice to call back the Dursleys was prepped. The concentrated mixture of basilisk venom and phoenix tears was clearly marked. And in absence of respectable clothes, Harry had just stolen some muggle terry cloth robes from a fancy hotel in downtown London.

“Alright folks,” Harry pointed to the labeled vials. “Those are the potions to counteract your Polyjuice. That’s going to be step one, but before you do that, I need some hugs from your proper bodies.” This time, it was James who was unable to contain his girlish squeal as he ran over and squeezed the dickens out of his son. “Great Godric, I’m proud of you.” Harry blushed a bit, not realizing how much hearing that would mean to him. Part of Harry wondered if he had been drugged.

Sirius was the next to squee and viciously grabbed Harry’s back in a hug, while Harry was still in the arms of his dad. “Merlin’s balls Harry. This year has without a doubt been the best of my life. If you know, it counts as my life.”

Lily waited until the two men had released him before properly hugging her son for what she feared would be the last time. There were a million things she wanted to say to him, but all she could get out was “Hablugggughah.”

Harry laughed at the sounds his Mum was making through her tears as he hugged her back. “I love you too Mum.” Harry stayed that way for over two minutes past the point he was ready to let go and well into uncomfortable areas. Finally he said, “Okie Mum, that’s enough.”

Lily seemed reluctant but did release her son, and pointlessly wiped her tears away. It took about a second before they pooled at the corners of her eyes and were spilling down her face again. For a moment, Harry wondered if that was why he was attracted to Cho at one point. He wisely chose not to mention this aloud.

Bob helped set the mood by announcing, "I'm sure if I could cry, I would right now."

James, Sirius, and Lily exchanged the last of their hugs with each other. They all settled themselves, stripped out of their clothes, and put on the bathrobes. James and Lily were holding hands and shared a look with Sirius. On unspoken agreement, they all at the same time, tipped back their Polyjuice counters and gulped down the disgusting sludge.

It took about twenty seconds before all the changes were complete. Vernon and Petunia were still holding hands, and Dudley and Harry were smiling at each other. Petunia got an evil smile on her face and flashed everyone present, resulting in a number of gags, and a dementor's hacking cough. Bob once again said out loud, "I'm sure if I could cry, I would right now."

Harry announced, "I'm going to stun you all, because Bob's got to let his power out to kiss you. Hopefully the next conscious thought you have is either in these bodies again, or in the portraits. Good luck." Vernon, Petunia, and Dudley all nodded resolutely as Harry hit them with stunners.

Bob went over to Dudley's body first, letting out all of his power as he gently picked the man up. Even though he was unconscious from Harry's stunner, his body was still shivering. Bob kissed him and laid the man down on the ground away from their main worktable. He was licking his lips and said, "Tastes like chicken."

Harry rolled his eyes at Bob as he went over to Dudley's lifeless body. While Harry began prepping it, Bob administered the Kiss to both Vernon and Petunia. He carried them over towards where Harry was working, setting Vernon down on Dudley's left side, and Petunia on his right intertwining their fingers so that they were all holding hands.

Harry looked at Bob. "You know, I'm really scared right now, but I'm not even sure which outcome scares me more."

Bob shook his head. "It's a waste of time being scared, as it'll probably be an outcome you've not even imagined."

“Don’t talk like that, Bob,” Harry whined. “God dammit. Now I’m even more scared.”

Harry cast an Ennervate on all the lifeless bodies, and they all seemed to be breathing if empty at the moment. “You ready?”

Bob nodded and rubbed his belly. “I think I can feel them kicking.”

Harry nodded and poured the blood sacrifice mixture down Dudley’s throat. Even soulless, his body was still capable of swallowing with minor urging. Harry rubbed some salve onto all the fattiest areas, and cast the spell activating them all into the mixture. The magic in the air was palpable.

Bob lurched a little bit and took a step back. “Whoa! It’s working, they want to go. Hurry up and open a portal.” Bob moved a bit further away and sat down with his arms wrapped around his midsection, holding in the fighting souls of James, Lily, and Sirius.

A small cut on Harry’s palm spilled a few drops of his own blood, activating the rune he had prepped and with his wand cast one of the darkest spells around. This was basically the first half of a demon summoning ritual, but it had been found to be able to contact dead people who were light and pure as well as dark and malevolent. It was their best bet. Harry could see the fat in Dudley’s body was sizzling a little and burning away, so time was of the essence. A swirling black spiral opened up in the air right behind the Dursleys’ three bodies. Harry was continuing the long incantation on the portal, and they could only hope this would work.

A small black imp looking creature jumped out of the dark vortex shouting off some gibberish, while Harry struggled to keep the portal stable. Bob ran over to it and stepped on its head with a pop and squish. “Let’s not release too many demons into the world today. Please.” A second deformed looking gnome of sorts came shooting out of the vortex. This time Harry caught it with his hand and just chucked it back in.

“We’re running out of time, Harry.” Bob announced seeing crackles of light start jumping around the blackened portal.

Harry left the portal where it was and fell to the ground by the Dursleys. He pulled all three of them into a hug, and tried focusing all of his love on them.

“Oww!” Bob yelled visibly flinching. “Don’t use love, Harry! Just will or determination. Your love is in my belly.”

Harry recouped again as more and more lights and sparks were flying out of the blackened vortex. He tried wishing for them to come back, he tried willing them back, he was running out of time, and tried the simplest thing he could. “Accio Dursleys’ souls?”

He may not have quite yelled the spell, as much as questioned it, but the charm for some odd reason worked. Three different formless ghostly shapes came flying from the vortex and into each of the three Dursleys. Harry fell back in surprise and hurriedly closed the portal. Once the black cloud began dissipating, Harry banished the remnants of smoke with an elemental push, and wiped the rune clean.

Bob was seated again and looked exhausted. Briefly he wondered just what it was that was stuck between his toes, but knew better than to look.

Harry was feeling the same exhaustion too. Harry crawled over towards the three Dursleys still on the ground and began to inspect them. They appeared halfway normal, if a bit pale. Dudley’s body had clearly lost a lot of weight, but looked almost relatively healthy. For a brief moment there, Harry relaxed and thought they’d been successful.

Then Dudley sat up and screamed.

A blood curdling scream that made the hair on Harry’s neck stand at attention. It was the sound of torture, of a kick wide right, of an unplanned pregnancy, of defeat, of loss, and of pain. Dudley turned his head and caught sight of Harry sitting there staring at him. He stopped screaming and was panting trying to catch his breath. “Ha-

Harry?" he said. His voice sounded coarse and rough, like he had been screaming for days.

"Dudley?" Harry asked a bit redundantly. "Can you understand me? Are you alright?"

"Oh God, Harry, I'm so sorry. I'm so so sorry." Dudley began prattling off and mumbling incoherently. "Help me Harry. Help. Us. Help us. Harry, help us."

"What's wrong?" Harry asked curiously. "You're talking a bit nutters. You need to slow down. You're not making sense."

Dudley became even less and less intelligible. "Them! They need it... I did it... we deserved it... we... help... Harry?"

Harry was flabbergasted and wasn't sure how he could help. It didn't matter much because at that moment, Vernon and Petunia both sat up and screamed. Their screams were not like Dudley's. Dudley had sounded like a wounded and frightened man. But Vernon and Petunia's unholy shrieks of terror didn't sound like anything human. Both of them began crawling away on the floor without any rhyme or reason. They were moving around almost testing their abilities as if they were the oldest, ugliest babies ever, outside of France. They continued to shriek and scream non-stop so badly that Harry couldn't even hear himself think. Nor think about how loud he thought.

"Shut them up!" Bob called out covering his where his ears would be.

This surprised Harry, as Bob was not easily rattled, but apparently the sounds Vernon and Petunia were making, were as bothersome to him as they were damaging to Harry's eardrums. Harry sent two quick stunners at Vernon and Petunia only to gape in shock as the spells just bounced right off of them. Harry tried two more, this time with about triple the power of the last pair. Again, they just glanced off as though the spell couldn't penetrate their hide.

Harry tried a few silencing charms on them, which seemed to merely be absorbed and have no effect.

“Magic... Harry,” Dudley gasped out. “You magic...help... Harry. Forget.” Dudley said as he began to shake. Harry was impressed because before when Dudley shook, it made for slight shifts in the tides, but this time it wasn’t even entertaining. Dudley quietly muttered, “Make... forget.”

Petunia and Vernon were now attacking each other while shrieking. It didn’t seem to be communication or to serve any purpose. Just screams and shrieks as they clawed at each others’ face and arms. They were both covered in scratches and completely unconcerned with their injuries.

“Harry... save... us,” the now convulsing and shaking Dudley pleaded. “Forget... everything... forget... memory...”

Harry had no clue what had happened or was happening, but he at least understood what Dudley was asking for. The stone floor of Hogwarts rippled like a wave coming to shore, sweeping Vernon and Petunia over right next to Dudley. Dudley sat up and was able to turn to Harry. “Please...” Dudley wheezed out though it seemed to be taking all his strength just to say that.

Harry nodded at the three of them together, gathered his magic and yelled out, “Obliviate!” Only to be frustrated and forced to duck as the spell rebounded off of them. Dudley’s eyes began to water, and in barely a hoarse whisper, he again begged, “Please...”

This time, Harry tapped into the power he got through his blood brother, he tapped into the power he got through Hogwarts, and he gathered every last ambient bit of magic in the air that he could. He closed his eyes, centering himself, ignoring Dudley’s quivering, and the screams and shrieks coming from Petunia and Vernon. Harry’s eyes snapped open with an ice cold focus. He calmly intoned, “Obliviate!”

He was aiming it with his wand, which he had needed for the portal. The spell flickered the tip of his wand on for a second and then off in a brief moment of darkness, before rocketing in a massive explosion of light and heat that tilted Dudley’s head back in a smile. The maelstrom of magical energy was like a furnace blowing over all three

Dursleys. They all stopped screaming and moving. Their bodies were floating off the ground, fluttering in the wash of the supercharged spell.

The three Dursleys landed softly on the ground, heads aimed towards Harry with only blank empty stares. Harry had been intending to put as much as he could into the spell, but he also wanted to make sure it wouldn't damage them physically in any way. He wasn't sure if it had worked, given the stream and funnel of magic he just cooked them with. Out of the corner of his eye, Harry saw Bob just looking at the scene in utter confusion and was not going to be any help.

Dudley opened his mouth, and for a moment Harry wondered if he was going to say something when he let out a gasp and gulp as he exploded in magical energy. A swirling purple cloud appeared behind the three Dursleys in the exact location the blackened portal had been. It was sucking in and siphoning off all the heat and energy the Dursleys' steaming spent bodies were pumping out. Harry had a moment to blink in confusion as he watched Petunia, Vernon, and Dudley all get yanked straight back into the purple spiral. Harry didn't even think about it as he jumped headfirst into the magical disturbance reaching out to grab onto his relatives. Harry felt the magic tearing at his body as he was being pulled along with them into God knows where. His magic responded with its own instinctual shield. Harry hastily tried sending a spell at the Dursleys to protect them as well, only to see it bounce off them and fly outside of the funnel of wind pulling them all.

Harry was horrified to watch the skin and flesh peeling away from their bodies, shriveling and decaying right before his eyes. He caught up with Dudley and grabbed firmly onto his arm, only to feel the flesh in his hands withering away. Dudley turned to look towards Harry in confusion. He saw his skin melting off his body, while Harry struggled to hold onto him.

Suddenly, Harry felt a magical tug behind him, pulling him from where he came and away from the Dursleys. Petunia and Vernon were getting smaller and smaller as the distance between them grew and they were silently being carried away to oblivion. Harry held onto Dudley, with all of his might, scrambling and scratching his arm,

refusing to let him slip away too. It was a battle he was losing. This was not something Harry was used to, and he was fighting it as hard as he could. Dudley's glassy eyes looked into Harry's. Dudley looked calm and unconcerned as he examined his surroundings. His hoarse raspy voice whispered, "Where am I?"

Harry knew the memory charm had definitely worked now, but that was no help as he was pawing onto Dudley's arm refusing to let him go. Dudley asked in an empty voice, "What am I?"

"I won't let you go!" Harry screamed as Dudley began slipping from his grip. Harry was only holding onto his left hand now, as the force pulling Harry back was gaining momentum, and Dudley just kept getting pulled away. He looked up into Harry's eyes, as the last of his fingertips were torn from Harry's grip. "Who am I?"

Harry watched Dudley get sucked away as the flesh was flaking off Dudley's body. Harry looked down at piece of ring finger from the second knuckle up that he'd managed to rip right off of Dudley's left hand and in that moment, Harry finally understood.

Harry smiled as he felt a well of emotion stirring. He called out as loud as he could, fighting the rapidly growing distance between Dudley and him, "Your..." Harry got a little choked up and raised his voice, yelling with pride, "Your name is Bob!"

Author's Note: Props to padfootjr24 for guessing this after the first chapter of this story. Naturally I did my best to divert actually answering what he said, but this was the bunny for the story. Final chapter is all that's left. Let me know what you think.

CHAPTER TWENTY-ONE

Bob was clutching his ears, struggling to muffle the slightly familiar sounding shrieks of Petunia and Vernon Dursley. He had a bad feeling about this. It was the sort of feeling only extended exposure to Harry Potter could provide. When Bob felt Harry begin to pull on Bob's magic, he realized that was why he had such a bad feeling. Bob made an effort to double-check on James, Lily, and Sirius. It wasn't really all that difficult to do considering that feeling nothing because they're fine and feeling nothing because they're gone would feel pretty much the same. But whatever Harry was doing was going to be big. And Bob knew if Harry had any hope of fixing the Dursleys, it would take something big, like shake the foundations of Hogwarts big. When he felt the castle beginning to tremble, Bob muttered, "Oh dear."

Bob could almost taste the anticipation when he saw Harry's eyes snap open. His curiosity was getting the better of him and Bob couldn't turn away when Harry cast the enormous memory charm on the three Dursleys. Sadly Bob was completely unprepared for at that moment his brain threw up inside his head.

An interesting tidbit, Bob would only now theorize, was that it appears witnessing a memory charm happen to your past self, has a tendency to stretch and bend the charm, occasionally even break it completely. Not to mention, insofar as dementors are concerned, it was entirely within the realm of possibility that it could also projectile vomit.

It may have been a lifetime of memories to some, but to Bob, it was barely a page in a book. Of course it was the most important page and the answer to all the questions he'd wondered for decades. Questions he'd given up on finding the answers too, and a couple answers he could have done without. He vaguely remembered his life, and what it had been like. He more clearly understood what he was, how he came to be, but there was still a lot that was blurry. He once again remembered discovering them, and what they had been doing. Only now did he fully comprehend who they were and what he had done.

But even still, it was unbelievably disconcerting to essentially watch yourself be born. Or maybe created was a more accurate term.

He began to feel the fear and panic his blood brother felt and only now noticed the swirling purple vortex and complete absence of anyone else in the Chamber. "What to do, what to do," Bob hummed happily. His hand felt something in his pocket that he had kept for a couple of years now. It was a safety blanket of sorts, even if he never expected to use it. But now, he knew he would actually need it. He pulled out his very own wand, one that Harry had jam-packed full of crazy spells and ridiculously useless things, and customized to work for Bob. If he ever needed to hide himself as a bar stool, he need only hold the wand and call out "One hundred and three." Exactly why Bob always remembered that particular trigger was somewhat of a mystery.

Bob scratched the top of his head trying to remember how to do this right. It was an unconscious maneuver that always freaked people out. Not many people have enough dandruff to choke a donkey. Bob suddenly remembered how to work it and called out, "Come here Harry."

Bob wasn't sure why he didn't see any magic, but his wand was reacting like he was fishing and got a bite. Bob put a second hand on his wand and began tugging the fish in. He had to fight the urge to try and reel the wand. After a few yanks seemed to not make any difference, Bob just held onto the wand, and waited for it to pull Harry back up. After all, he'd already been on the other side of this, and he remembered Harry being pulled up while he was pulled down. Bob had been patiently waiting for a minute or so wondering why the fish hadn't jumped up into the boat when he realized, he didn't know if Harry was ever pulled all the way up, he just knew that he had been pulled all the way down.

Bob's worries were getting the better of him, so he kept both hands on his wand and yanked it as hard as he could. The response was immediate as Harry came rocketing out the purple swirling vortex, just as it was closing and beginning to dissipate. Bob took one look at his blood brother flying towards him at an unsafe speed, and merely

reacted on instinct. Bob ducked low to the ground as Harry sailed over him crashing into the worktable behind him with a loud whump.

“Alright there, Harry?” Bob asked.

Harry swung his head trying to shake off the tiredness and ill effects a massive time sucking vortex of doom could have on a person. “I’m alright.” Harry replied firmly. A moment later of continuing dizziness Harry added, “I think.”

Bob nodded at Harry and went over to help him up.

“Hey... umm, Bob?” Harry began unsure quite how to put this. “Do you know what just happened?”

“Yeah,” Bob assured him. “I have a pretty good idea.”

Harry looked up at Bob and could only smile ruefully. “Oh!” Harry remembered and handed Bob the last two knuckles of his left ring finger. “I believe this is yours.”

“Hey!” Bob smiled brightly. “My finger!” Bob took it and tried to stick on to the nub he had. “I always wondered where I left that.”

“Wait a second,” Harry insisted picking up on what Bob was saying. “How long have you known?”

Bob sat back on the couch flexing the fingers on his left hand. “A few minutes now. Watching you do that memory charm sort of... broke the memory charm finally.”

“Oh,” Harry nodded thinking he didn’t understand that but it made a lot of sense.

“Yeah...” Bob said. “Up until you hit them, err me, with that... I had no clue at all.”

“Hey!” Harry smiled. “You know what I just realized?”

Bob chuckled, “I have a few guesses but they’re probably wrong.”

“You kissed yourself!” Harry said. “Sucked Padfoot right out of your body and into your body!”

Bob nodded. “And you’re dating yourself, but you’re right. I hadn’t thought of that.”

Harry noticed all the grime covering his own body and was cleaning himself up a bit. “If this is too soon considering how weird getting memories back like that must be, just say so. But I am curious... how much do you remember?”

Bob shook his head. “It’s not too soon, but all of it is hazy. We didn’t exactly end up just a few years ago. It’s not like I remember dinosaurs, but my mind was sort of an empty slate for a while. No one around to write on it. Just had Bob across the top and that was about it.”

Harry winced. He wasn’t sure how to put this nicely so he just asked, “And your parents? Aunt Petunia and Uncle Vernon?”

Bob sighed. “That I do remember and understand, though I think that was more repressed than anything else. But before we get into this Harry...shouldn’t we do something about...?”

Harry shrugged. “About what?”

“How about your parents? Sirius?” Bob chuckled.

Harry slapped his forehead. “Oh geebus! I forgot about them.” Harry jumped up to grab the soul-sucking portrait frames. “Man, that didn’t take long. I was afraid I’d screw up and lose them forever and mope for a while.”

“I can understand you’re still a bit preoccupied,” Bob smiled. “I was just thinking it might be easier for Lily to hear this too.” Bob stopped. “Shit. She’s my aunt, isn’t she?”

Harry hadn’t even connected that either. “Yeah, she is. Lot hotter than Marge too.”

Bob struggled to grasp onto his memories. "Marge... Marge... oh the fat one you blew up?"

Harry nodded as he set out the portraits and got the potions for Bob.

Bob chuckled. "She told me she used to train her dogs to bite you."

"I knew it!" Harry exclaimed loudly. He quietly grumbled to himself, "Tubby wino bitch."

"Alright Bob," Harry said as he set out the first portrait, before stopping to consider, "Or would you prefer Dudley?"

"Bob please," Bob said with a shake of his head. "That name I barely remember, while this one's been my name for thousands of years. Still not sure how I feel about the person I was either, as a lot of what I remember is from what you've told me."

Harry frowned and looked over the massive portrait at the dementor. "True, you were a buttmunch through and through growing up, but you were a kid. Raised by Vernon and Petunia. Thick skull, for sure, but you ended up an alright guy." Harry smiled. "I was really kind of liking you when I... well, you know... sucked my godfather's soul into your body. Sorry bout that."

Bob sighed dramatically. "It'll take some time, but eventually I may forgive you."

"Right," Harry assured Bob, showing how worried he was. "Frankly, that's probably the reason I'm not freaking out more. Because the Dursley I cared most about is already my friend. To be honest, I don't really feel all that bad for your parents."

Bob shrugged but understood.

Harry started to laugh. "The way they complain about my freakishness... ahh, I'm looking forward to rubbing this in their faces."

"They're dead," Bob retorted.

Harry sobered quickly. "Sorry."

"Don't apologize," Bob told Harry. "Let's get your relatives out of me and I'll tell you the whole story."

Harry handed Bob the potion catered towards Sirius. "Here's Padfoot first. And don't forget, they're your relatives too."

Bob could tell this was going to take some getting used to. He knocked back the potion and laid down on the couch.

Harry cut the palms on both of his hands, to bind and activate the portrait to him. He then straddled Bob and waited while Sirius' soul was sucked into it. A loud slurping sound and an almost comical bell signaled the portrait was full. Harry turned it around and saw a picture of Sirius laying half off of a bed, his head hanging over the side, with his mouth wide open and drool dripping down his face.

"Looks like it worked," Harry announced. "Though I suppose we'll have to wait for Sirius to wake up."

"Lovely," Bob said curtly. "Now let's do Uncle Jimmy and Aunt Lils before I get irritable."

"Little late for that," Harry mumbled.

"Be nice," Bob replied having heard Harry loud and clear. "You know you're forcing me to throw up my meals here. It's not quite the same as it is for you. It's a bit more than just tasting different on the way out than the way in."

"Sorry," Harry replied earnestly. Harry and Bob repeated the process and both James and Lily were also safely ensouled in their paintings asleep on beds.

"You okay there Bob?" Harry asked him as he seemed a bit unstable.

Bob nodded. "Yeah fine... just, that's tiring work. You mind if I relax a bit?"

Harry looked around. "Yeah, you should be fine. Go ahead."

Bob continued lying on the couch, but the ambient temperature in the air dropped significantly, as he stopped trying to hold back his powerful aura. Were there anyone else in the area they would be caught up in a maelstrom of painful memories and teeth-chattering cold. Harry, on the other hand, only felt the cold, and he could easily counter that with a slight warming charm. "You did good, Bob. Real good."

"Thanks," Bob replied. "Got a whole lot of answers to questions I forgot I had too."

Harry called for Dobby, who popped in and fell to the floor shivering. "Oh shit, Dobby, I'm sorry."

"N- N- No pr- pr- problem, Master," Dobby said as he fought the bitter chill.

"I'll be back in a second Bob," Harry grabbed Dobby and popped the pair of them into the kitchens. Dobby immediately warmed up and looked up at Harry oddly.

Harry raised his hands in defense. "Sorry, I forgot Bob was doing that. But I'm pretty exhausted and could use some food. I was going to see if you had anything."

Dobby just shook his head with a frown and snapped his fingers. A fresh hot boxed pizza appeared in front of Harry. "That'll work. Thanks Dobby. I didn't mean to do that to you." And with a pop Harry was back down in the Chamber of Secrets.

Harry went for a slice, only to realize it was completely cold by the time it reached his mouth. He chucked that slice away and set a warming charm around the box and pizza again. He finally got himself some sustenance. "Mmm, food."

Bob started softly snoring while Harry was finishing off his meal and getting his second wind. Once Harry had finished up, he conjured a

searing hot fireball to float right in front of Bob's face. Bob immediately woke up and smacked the thing out from in front of him. "Stop it, Harry, I'm tired."

"You can sleep soon," Harry said. "But until the portraits wake up, you can give me some answers."

Bob grumbled but agreed that sounded fair. "Alright... so what did you want to know?"

"Petunia? Vernon?" Harry asked weakly.

"Okay..." Bob replied slowly and carefully reconciled all of his old memories. "We're talking like near the end of the stone age or something here though, so it's not quite like remembering yesterday. This was a long ass time ago. And you seem to have stirred up all these memories I'd been blocking out. My earliest memories were hazy, as I went around aimlessly. Creatures ran from me and feared me, and I had no idea what I was. I thought I was one of a kind."

"Aww Bob," Harry cooed. "You are one of a kind."

"Thank you very much," Bob indulged. "Anyways, I've no concept of time about this, but I'm guessing it was a century or two before I found them. Not sure if Mum and Dad ended up further back than me or just someplace else, but I hadn't seen them before this."

Harry nodded noticing how Bob said 'them' with distaste.

"At first I thought they were all like me, and I'd discovered a colony to belong to," Bob explained. "Until I realized what it was. There were two that were feeding on and abusing all the rest of them. And those two struck me as familiar. Didn't understand what had happened or how, but I could tell what they were doing wasn't right. They saw me as a threat, when they realized their... auras... didn't affect me the way they did the others. We fought and struggled and couldn't seem to really even harm each other. I'm not sure what happened or how it did, but eventually all of the others were helping me, holding them down and..." Bob stopped and shrugged. "And that was when I sort of let instinct take over, and I managed to suck the life right out of

them. After that, the bodies were just empty decayed husks that could be torn apart and no longer put themselves back together.”

“I take it those were the first two Kisses?” Harry asked in shock.

Bob nodded. “Yup. And as far as I know, that’s the only way to really end a dementor. And it’s only now that I realize, that was Mum and Dad. And that kinship I felt for all my other brethren, was because they probably really were my siblings.”

Harry nodded. “That’s why there’s so many, but it’s always been a fixed amount.”

“They sort of tended to me as their protector and guardian, and since then most of them have sort of molded themselves in my more peaceful image. They can get a bit moody, and occasionally want to help a Dark Lord here and there. But it’s not the politics. It’s just that the Ministry doesn’t call out ‘Polly want a cracker?’ near as often as the Dark Lords. Had Mum and Dad stuck around, they could probably have nearly taken over. We’re pretty tough when we want to be.”

Harry’s eyes widened as he realized that. It was true. A couple of crazed vengeful dementors could have systematically taken over large amounts of the world.

“We all sort eventually seemed to develop telepathy to communicate with each other, and there were a few magical creatures that didn’t flee from us,” Bob explained. “You listen in on phoenixes trilling for a few centuries and you pick up on the words. I still remember the first time I ran into a wizard. He took one look at me and ran. I was so used to muggles who couldn’t see us that I never bothered with things like clothes. Stole a bunch of old cloaks for us all at that point. Got to have some modesty,” Bob smiled.

Harry laughed. “I cannot even imagine what a wizard would do at the sight of hundreds of naked dementors.”

Bob nodded. “Was pretty lonely for a long time. None of the others ever developed the intelligence or consciousness I’ve always taken for granted. They all just followed their instincts or me. But they were

fine by themselves and didn't need me. I took an awful lot of naps. Occasionally waking up when one of them would be in distress. I've always helped them, because I still feel responsible to some degree." Bob stopped and let a small gasp. "Oh... of course! That's why I felt a connection with Hadrian."

"Hadrian?" Harry asked thinking back. "The Roman Emperor?"

Bob shook his head, "No no, though come to think of it, he was probably named after him. No, Hadrian was the first wizard I ever talked to very much, and he helped me learn pronunciations of the language."

Harry looked heartbroken. "But I... I thought..."

Bob winced. "I'm sorry Harry. I remember you jumping to that conclusion when I told you it had been centuries since the last wizard befriended a dementor. But in the seventeenth century, I felt a draw to a wizard and became friends with him. And now I see it was because we were both tools of Time."

"What?" Harry asked.

"Yeah... what?" Sirius portrait echoed.

Bob and Harry snapped their heads towards the portrait. "Sirius?" Harry asked. "You feeling okay? Nothing too horrendously wrong?"

Sirius shrugged looking around his empty looking room. "Fine. It's a bit weird to exist in space here and have a wall that looks like a painting. But in the oil up here," Sirius pointed to his head, "to know that the wall is the real world and I'm the painting... just freaky." Sirius brightened, "Comfy bed though."

Harry smiled at his godfather. "Good. Once Mum and Dad wake up too, I'll take you three up to see Moony and Albus, and we'll get Hogwarts to set you guys all up, okay?"

Sirius pointed to his left and right. "Does that mean those two are sleeping in similar beds on either side of me?"

Harry nodded. "Yeah, hold on." Harry sat Sirius' portrait up against the wall, and then stuck his Mum and Dad on either side of him angled inward, so he could see them both. "There you go. Better?"

Sirius shrugged. "I can see them now, yeah. So... it was a success? The Dursleys are back in their bodies and begging to get their old jobs back by now or something?"

Harry stopped smiling and was blushing a bit. "Umm... success is a pretty vague term."

"Oh dear," Sirius paled at his godson's response.

"The Dursleys' souls definitely did get back into their bodies," Harry forced a slight smile and slowly added, "But..."

"I can't help but notice your use of the past tense there." Sirius pointed out.

"What Harry is trying to avoid coming out and saying," Bob explained, "is that I'm Dudley." Bob finished with a small wave.

Sirius just looked at Bob, saying nothing, showing no emotion. After a long tense silence Sirius just said, "I think I'm going to go back to sleep now until this hallucination passes or Prongs and Bessie are up." Sirius turned around and climbed back into his bed.

"That's my aunt and uncle!" Bob cheered.

"Good night," a clearly not very tired Sirius called out as he faced away from the front of his painting.

"Padfoot," Harry pleaded.

"I said good night!" Sirius snapped.

Bob looked at Harry. "I know I won't get to do that to everyone but it will be fun to those that I can."

Harry chuckled and pointed out, "You know you can also kiss those three just to freak them out, though it does mean spitting them back up and re-ensouling them."

Bob nodded. "I'll keep that in mind."

A shiver was heard from Sirius' portrait.

Harry smiled. "Anyways... umm, tool of Time? What?"

"Oh right!" Bob remembered. "Do you know how time turners were invented?"

Harry racked his brain and realized, "Nope, no idea. But I know they've been around for a few centuries at least."

Bob nodded. "Yup. They were actually created December 22, 1677."

Harry's eyebrows rose. "That's a pretty precise date and good memory."

"Well, see that's just it," Bob continued. "Most people assume some brilliant witch or wizard dedicated their life to unraveling the workings of time and how to manipulate it. And after years and years of experimentation, managed to make a working time turner."

"I take it that's not how it happened."

Bob shook his head. "Nope. December 22, 1677 an intelligent wizard, named Hadrian as you may have guessed, was visited by a mysteriously cloaked man. He handed Hadrian a Wit-Sharpening Potion and told him to drink it and pay close attention. He hurriedly explained to Hadrian what time turners were, how they worked, and how to make one. He had brought with him all the base ingredients and pieces necessary. While explaining this all to Hadrian, he was actually crafting a time turner right there in front of him. When he finished making it, he grabbed some materials from Hadrian's personal stores and a Wit-Sharpening Potion. The cloaked man then removed the spell protecting his identity, and revealed himself to be Hadrian. He then instructed himself to now use the device, and go

back in time and teach the younger version of himself everything he just learned.”

Harry’s mind was getting stretched understanding this scenario.

Bob grinned seeing the confusion in Harry’s eyes. “When the younger Hadrian went outside and used the first ever time turner, the older or present one only then realized what had just happened. And what he had just done.”

Harry nodded. “So he taught his younger self all about time turners, only because he had already learned about them from his older self?”

“Exactly,” Bob stated. “It was just some sort of anomaly that happened, and if anyone is the cause of it, it would be Time itself. Before it happened, Hadrian never even considered time travel possible. He knew there were ways to slow it down or speed it up in relation to people’s perception. But stopping it, let alone going backwards in it? Considered completely impossible. Until it proved itself real.”

Harry was getting it. “And Dementors could never have existed, if they hadn’t already existed. Because it was your blood, your ingredients, and your reactions to your blood, that made you into what you are.”

Bob nodded, “I think you pulling some of my magic into that memory charm may have helped it a touch too.”

“Crap,” Harry’s eyes widened. “Of course a bloody memory charm would turn you guys into beings that force others to relive bad memories.”

Bob waved him off, “Meh, you had to do it to get me here.”

“Right,” Harry agreed though still unsure if the guilt he was feeling was predestined too. “So what happened to Hadrian after that?”

“Oh this is where it gets fun,” Bob explained. “When the Ministry of Magic, still a young institution at that point, found out about it, Hadrian

wouldn't reveal any of his secrets, but he did offer to conduct his research under their official banner, if not exactly their cognizance. So they came up with the title, the Department of Mysteries, and he began an intense study into the nature of Time and how it can be manipulated."

"He was the first Unspeakable?" Harry asked more than a little impressed.

Bob smirked under his hood. "Not exactly actually. I suppose officially, it was everyone he hired to work under him that were the first Unspeakables. But they weren't called that back then. I'll tell you what happened, and this is something I don't believe anyone else knows, though it is possible that others do."

Harry loved these kinds of secrets and was listening avidly.

"In his study on the nature of time, and how time turners worked," Bob explained. "Hadrian theorized on how to make the inverse of a time turner. One that would make it possible to travel to the future, not the past."

"I didn't think that was possible," Harry said with a furrowed brow. "Doesn't it kind of go against the general principles of timelines?"

Bob shrugged. "I don't know the facts of it, but he was pretty sure he had figured it out. And so he used it and away he went."

Harry sat there waiting. "And?"

"And it was assumed he would come right back after his trip. But he hasn't. Perhaps he went too far into the future where they won't allow him back, perhaps he died, though I personally doubt it, perhaps he'll show up right here in the next five minutes. No one really knows. But his research had required secrecy oaths on the members of his department, so that the bureaucratic buffoons in the Ministry couldn't misuse and abuse their work. And so all of the people he left there were completely unable to talk about what had happened or where he went."

“Unspeakables,” Harry chuckled.

Bob nodded. “And the Minister assumed he must have been onto something huge, massive, if they were staying this secretive about it. He let Hadrian’s second in command temporarily assume the lead, and gave them freedom after freedom within even the Ministry. It’s the reason the Department of Mysteries still doesn’t have to answer to any other Departments or even the Minister himself on some things.”

“So do they all...?”

“No, no. Not at all. Now they always make the newbies silent to everyone but the Department, though within the Department they can speak freely. Considering how long it’s been, I’m not sure if they were even able to tell any new people about Hadrian or to keep a look out for their real boss. Of course it could be a few more millennia before he arrives too.” Bob shrugged. “Nice guy though. Respected my privacy far more than you and Wesley ever did.”

“Oh shush,” Harry grumbled before looking over and seeing Sirius, James, and Lily all staring at Bob and Harry with wide eyes.

Having been found out, James blurted out, “That’s really why they’re called Unspeakables? You didn’t just make that up?”

“Time itself made time turners?” Lily asked in shock. “What the bloody hell?”

They all watched Sirius, waiting for him to blurt out something incredulous. Sirius saw Lily and James looking at him. He shook his head and defended his silence, “That’s nothing compared to the shit they were spewing before you two woke up. Trust me.”

“What did they say earlier?” James asked Sirius curiously.

Sirius frowned and looked over at Harry and Bob. “Ahem,” He faked clearing his throat. “Care to explain to us where those lovely bodies we were in earlier went off to?”

Harry grinned weakly and bowed his head. "No thank you, though. I wouldn't particularly care to, but I appreciate you asking."

"See, hon?" James said to his wife. "I told you karma wouldn't just let them go back to their world as normal."

Bob chuckled. "You're right about that. Karma showed up and kicked the shit out of 'em."

Lily frowned a little. "Even Dudley? He didn't seem so bad."

"Harumph!" Sirius loudly added.

"Yeah... about Dudley," Harry said avoiding eye contact with the portraits. "Bob, you want to field this one?"

"Sure, Harry," Bob turned back to them and just waved. "Hi Aunt Lily!"

James in the portrait lurched back from his position on his bed. "Err... buggerdee what?"

Lily gasped and threw her hand over her mouth. She looked a little closer at Bob and asked quietly, "Dudley?"

Bob nodded and threw up his arms. "Who knew?"

James turned to Sirius. "Hubbajigga huh?"

"Yes, yes fine, we get it," Harry mockingly interrupted. "Yes, I turned the Dursleys into the first generation of dementors. Yes they all got sucked back into time thousands of years. And yes Bob is really Dudley. Is this really all that hard to understand?"

James, Lily, and Sirius all replied together, "Yes!"

"Sheesh, alright already," Harry sighed. "Let's all gang up on the poor little orphan boy because he makes one little mistake."

Harry saw all the looks he was receiving from the portraits and Bob's amused smile. He corrected himself. "Okay maybe two mistakes. It's not like I ask for shit to happen to me. It just does."

And it did. With a massive crack, a football sized egg crashed right on the top of Harry's head. The smack and look of surprise on Harry's face was terribly entertaining for everyone else, as well as the loud cursing and complaining Harry was doing about the slight skull fracture he was sure he just received.

Bob did a double-take when he realized the egg was coated and protected in thick stone. This would explain why it did not break. It's also why it must have hurt Harry so much. But it appeared eerily still as it sat perched on Harry's head.

Harry was cursing cheeky ancient castles under his breath, as he pulled down the egg that had landed on his head. Apparently good old fashioned skull-bone was soft enough for it to safely land on, so Hogwarts was just having a spot of fun with him. After all, she did help fuel his power earlier. Not to mention that as soon as Harry took the egg from his head, he could feel it shifting and moving. The thick stone coating was flaking away and crumbling into dust revealing a more normal egg shell inside. And there was now a large crack in the egg shell.

Sirius recognized it and asked, "Harry? Is that the same one from your belly?"

Harry nodded. "Yup. Hogwarts has been incubating it and mothering it plenty for me. And it appears like it is time."

The shell was cracking more and more. Until a grey-stone beak began poking out of the largest hole the cracks had left. The beak was shifting up and down trying to break a bigger hole, while the little bird seemed to be letting out chirps. The fact that they sounded a lot more like hiccups didn't matter one bit to Harry.

"Hey little fellow," Harry greeted the bird once it managed to stick its head all the way out. Harry didn't know what to expect, but this creature was definitely unique. From what he could tell, instead of

feathers, the bird was made of stone. Harry helped peel away the larger pieces of shell that were stuck on the little shriveled freak thing. "You're a heavy one, aren't you?" Harry said as he realized the bird was solid stone and probably was one of the sturdiest baby birds ever.

The bird bobbed its little head up and down. It opened its mouth to chirp and sent a fireball right at Harry's eyebrows. "Whoa!" Harry yelped and slapped his forehead and face to stamp out the small fire. Harry smiled at the bird, ignoring the portraits laughing at 'Scorched-face Potter'. "You got some fire in you, don't you?"

Apparently, this word meant something to the little bird, as Harry swore he saw it smile, before exploding into flame. The remaining shell around the bird shattered in the blast of heat, and there was a very much completely flaming bird in Harry's lap.

Another yelp and Harry jumped backwards, launching the tiny bird of fire into the air, where it happily floated. The baby fire bird's movements were far from smooth and fluid, but it seemed to be bobbing up and down alright. Harry just looked at the thing, wondering what the hell it was. "Well that's a pretty cool trick. So can you change to fire and back to stone?"

Harry saw that smile through the flaming face again, and watched as the bird turned back into solid stone. Its little smile went away and it hurriedly began flapping its stone wings in the air to no effect. The infant bird crashed down to the ground like exactly what it was: a rock trying to fly. It did not look particularly pleased, and Harry hurried over to help him up. "I think we should remember to make that change when you're on the ground." Harry lifted the little bird into his arms. "And on something sturdy," He added feeling the weight of the odd little thing.

"That's fucked up Harry," James said with a smile. "Cute too."

Sirius grinned. "Somehow, that coming from your womb seems a bit more normal than what I would have expected."

Bob tried to imagine what else would live in Harry's womb and knew that was not a road any dementor ever wants to travel down.

A deep demonic voice started echoing all around the Chamber, "Just wait until I start drinking blood. Then I will feast on the hearts and minds of the weak."

Sirius gulped and looked at James and Lily with wide eyes.

Finally Harry cracked up. "Sorry Padfoot, but that one was too easy to pass up."

Bob laughed at how pale the Sirius in the portrait had gotten there. "I think Sirius may be lacking the strength of mind and heart."

"Oh hardy har har," Sirius grumbled realizing that it had been Harry pulling a little prank on them.

Bob lifted open his cloak, reached into his chest, and pulled out his heart. "Want to borrow mine?"

Always a mood killer to those who hadn't seen it before, but that cracked up Harry and Bob every time. Bob had to give it little repetitive squeezes to make it seem like it was beating. It's going that extra step that always makes it more fun.

Bob rolled his eyes as Sirius, James, and Lily all looked like they might be sick. The bird started to look at Bob's heart like it might be dinner. Bob quickly shoved it back into his chest and pulled his cloak tighter. "So, Harry? Has your latest bastardization of nature got a name?"

Harry frowned and was soothing the little stone bird. "Hmm... good question." Harry lifted it up to his face to look it in the eye. He felt a little premonition of sorts, and wondered if it might be trying to communicate its name. It wasn't, but at least Harry had some notice this time and ducked the fireball that it coughed up at him. A quiet mental conversation with the bird's unofficial mother, Hogwarts, and Harry nodded with a smile. "I like that idea," Harry said towards the ceiling. He looked over at Bob, and said, "Bob, I would like you to meet Dudley. Dudley, this here is your namesake, Bob."

Bob looked a little honored for that one and didn't even dodge the fireball coughed in his direction. He quickly stamped out the singed and smoking part of his cloak and nodded at the name. Truthfully, he was afraid he might get choked up and didn't want to his voice to crack like a nancy boy. After a moment, he just said, "Nice to meet you, Dudley."

Sirius, James, and Lily could see this meant more to Bob than he would ever willingly admit, but considering all that was left of their existence was pretty much dementor food, they figured now was not the time to antagonize Bob.

Bob took a deep rattling breath and continued. "So any idea what Dudley is?"

Harry shrugged, "Well, Dudley was a normal phoenix egg, crossed with my womb and weirdness, as well as Hogwarts added a mothering touch, so as for a species? Nope no clue at all, but there is one thing I do know that Hogwarts told me earlier. And that is that Dudley..." Harry paused and smiled brightly, "is most definitely a girl."

Bob looked offended for a moment, and grumbled quietly, "Pretty shitty name for a girl."

Harry shook his head as he pet the bird. "I think she likes it."

"Yeah, whatever," Bob grumbled. "Fire."

Harry yelped as the baby girl burst into flame. He was slow enough in reacting to realize, "Hey, she doesn't burn me!" Harry smiled and held her in both hands shifting her back and forth in amazement. "Dudley weighs practically nothing as fire. This is cool." Harry lifted her up over his head. "Hey check this out." Harry remembered what in muggle's minds passed for a magic show. Harry opened his mouth wide and dipped Dudley's flaming little head into his mouth acting like a fire breather. Harry carefully took both hands off the light flaming bird dangling from his mouth. He waved both of his free hands in the air, gritting his teeth and saying, "Ta-da!"

Lily scolded from her portrait, "Stop that Harry! That's horrible! You're probably permanently hindering Dudley's development."

James just looked at his wife sheepishly and called out, "Stone."

Harry started to choke when the heavy bird's weight collapsed onto Harry's face, and both he and Dudley crashed onto the ground.

"Oh," Lily smiled at her husband. "Right."

Harry was rubbing his nose, hoping it wasn't broken. "Dudley, sweetie. We're going to need to go over these trigger words first thing."

Dudley chirped a happy fireball.

Bob questioned, "Hey Harry? You ever wonder if Nature's trying to pervert you back?"

Harry thought about that one, and decided he didn't want to know. "Alright, Bob. You can go to sleep and keep your disturbing observations to yourself. I'm going to set up the terrifying trio and check in with Albus and Moony. Thanks again, and feel to completely relax."

Bob let his exhaustion go and relaxed back.

Harry fashioned himself a pouch and let the sleepy little Dudley bird, nestle up next to him and get some sleep. He grabbed the three portraits and popped up to the DADA classroom first.

After picking a good spot the left of the chalkboard, Harry mounted Padfoot's portrait. A little conversation with the castle and the portrait was sucked straight back into the wall. It reemerged in the same spot, though its frame looked shinier and newer.

"Whoa!" Sirius exclaimed. "I can talk to Hogwarts." He grinned down at Harry. "Lord, she's got a lot to say about you."

"Lies," Harry insisted. "They're all lies!"

Sirius was staring off into space with a smile. "Damn good lies, then."

"Come on, Harry!" Lily pleaded. "Hook me up! I want the dirt on everyone!"

Harry looked at his mother oddly.

"Okay, you most of all, but still," she urged him to hurry.

Harry popped away with the last two portraits, hanging up his mum first in the Charms classroom, and his dad in Transfiguration.

James' portrait was sucked back into Hogwarts and re-emerged with all three parental figures in his frame.

Lily just shook her head disappointedly. "Harry, Harry, Harry."

"Good god, Harry!" Sirius cheered with a smile. "Three Slytherins at once!"

"Slytherins, Harry?" James whined. "Really? I mean sure three chicks at once..."

"Well, I never said that," Harry defended keeping his head down. "And I don't think you should count Blaise... that was... embarrassing."

"Why don't you count her?"

Harry's eyes widened and he just shook his head. "Just... nevermind. It was an honest mistake and... let's pretend Blaise was never even there."

Sirius disappeared for a moment and then reappeared in frame. "Moony and Albus are trashed. They're arguing over what they should do in the last moments before Harry ends the world."

"Great," Harry grumbled. "Can you all move around easily enough?"

James nodded. "Hogwarts is helping us out with how to move, as well as giving us all the juicy gossip."

"Alright then," Harry nodded. "Feel free to make your entrance whenever you want to." Harry wrapped his arms around the sleeping Dudley and popped right into the Headmaster's office.

"Harry!" Albus cheered at the sudden appearance. Luckily for the Headmaster it was Harry, as he was more than a little vulnerable. "How's it shaking, my big fat gay Defense Professor?"

"Oh shut your mouth Albus! He's not big at all." Remus corrected.

"Got a bottle for me?" Harry asked hopefully, taking a seat next to Remus, opposite the Headmaster.

Albus reached into one of his desk drawers and pulled out a fresh bottle of Ogden's for Harry. Harry took the bottle gratefully, eyed it for a moment, then opened it and took a swig.

Harry sat back, enjoying the two staring at him, waiting for him to begin. Harry grinned, "So... what's going on?"

"Is everyone resting comfortably?" Albus tried.

Harry nodded. "Bob's probably snoring right now."

"Harry," Remus scolded at the brief answer. "How about Lily, James, Sirius, and the Dursleys?"

"Oh, them?" Harry asked innocently. "Yeah... those guys..."

"What the bloody hell?" Phineas Nigellus Black yelled loudly. "What sort of demonic work is this?"

Albus looked up at the snarky Headmaster in the portrait. His eyes widened to see the man's hair had been cursed away.

"Sweet!" Sirius cheered as he popped into Phineas' frame. "Magic does work!"

“Oh dear Salazar!” Phineas shrieked at the sight of his great-great-grandson.

Sirius put up his hand to block the light. “Careful with the glare off your dome, Gramps.”

“Hey!” James appeared in a portrait behind Remus. “Where’d you get the wand, Padfoot?”

Sirius shrugged. “Stole it from a witch that was sleeping.”

“Let me see it!” James called out from across the room. Albus and Remus just kept looking between the two overactive portraits in slight shock.

“Catch,” Sirius called out as he chucked the wand towards James.

Albus’ eyes widened to see the wand fly out from the canvas into a ghostly wisp of smoke that flew lazily across the office flipping end over end before reappearing in front of James as a part of his portrait. James caught it in one swift swipe. “Thanks,” James called out and stunned the angry looking woman whose portrait he had just taken over. “Snippy bitch.”

Albus chuckled.

“Childish, aren’t they?” a ghostly floating Lily Potter chided, startling both the Headmaster and Remus into jumpy yips.

“So he killed you, too?” Albus somberly asked.

Lily smiled and shook her head, while Harry just downed more firewhiskey. “Not at all,” she grinned mischievously. “Just getting used to my ghost legs.” With a graceful leap, she floated right into the portrait with her husband. She took the wand from him, and transfigured the stunned woman into a couch. She sat down, and pulled James to join her.

“That’s so freaking cool,” Remus cried. “So can you guys get everywhere in the castle?”

“Well,” James grinned. “At first that was the plan, until Padfoot went and invaded people’s privacy before we were even set up.”

Sirius shrugged as he was gently rubbing the top of Phineas’ shiny head. “I got lost! Honest mistake!”

“Padfoot,” Remus didn’t believe him for a second.

“Did you know Minnie snores?” Sirius asked.

“Padfoot!” Remus scolded with a smile.

Albus’ nose twitched in amusement. “That’s only when she has a hairball,” he over-shared.

“So... wow,” Remus summarized. “You guys are a new part of Hogwarts for good, now? Not going to be possessing any more muggles?”

Sirius moved into a portrait closer to them all when Phineas ran away to hide. “We’re here for good. Or at least until my godson brushes up more on ways to cheat the blackest of magics and all those sacrificial rituals.”

“Yeah, really, Harry, your evil black magic ritual knowledge is barely above average,” Lily complained with a sad shake of her head. “And you call yourself a Dark Lord?”

Harry frowned and furrowed his brow. “I don’t call myself a Dark Lord.”

“Well, you might want to give it some thought,” James suggested. “You’ve got an impressive resume and would be excellent at it, I’m sure. Dark Lord Potter just sounds... dignified. And well-dressed.”

“Stop it! Stop it all of you!” Albus insisted. “No more corrupting the ridiculously powerful freak boy! It’s too dangerous!”

“Oh hush,” Harry scolded. “I’m not a Dark Lord. And I’m not going to be a Dark Lord. At least not until Albus passes away.” Harry theorized. “Once he kicks the bucket, it’ll be so much easier to take Hogwarts and public morale.”

“Stop it Harry!” Albus snapped. “No! Bad!”

Harry sighed thinking they were going to get into the same old argument about how without evil there’s no good, so it’s got to be good to be evil sometimes. “What? What? I already said I’m not a Dark Lord.”

Albus just stared at Harry accusingly. “And how are the Dursleys doing?”

Harry made sure to keep his parents and godfather from blurting out anything condemning. Harry acted confused, rubbing his chin in thought. “The... who?”

“Ohhhh dear,” Albus groaned perhaps a touch too sexually.

“You remember them, Harry? Petunia, Vernon, Dudley?” Remus asked helpfully.

“Oh!” Harry jumped up on realization. “That’s right! Check this out!” Harry carefully reached into his covered pouch and pulled out the gentle little sleeping hunk of rock.

Albus looked at what Harry placed onto his desk. “Is that paperweight breathing?”

Harry turned towards where Fawkes was perched. “Fawkes? Want to meet your baby?”

Fawkes flew over and rubbed the top of her head onto the little stone bird. Dudley slowly woke up and looked around.

Albus and Remus just stared at the living gargoyle in confusion. Fawkes opened her mouth and trilled a welcoming tune. Dudley

opened her mouth and shot a fireball into Albus' beard. A belch of surprise from the Headmaster, indicating just how much drinking they had done, exploded into a flash of massive flames. "Not again," he moaned as he patted out his smoldering chin.

"Is that the phoenix that was in your belly, Harry?" Remus asked.

Harry nodded. "Yup. Hogwarts has been helping keep her incubated until she was born just a little bit ago. I named her Dudley."

"After your cousin?" Albus asked in surprise.

Harry shook his head. "No, after Bob."

Albus wasn't quite sure how to respond to that. "So what did happen to the Dursleys?"

"Let's see how Dudley reacts to magic," Harry suggested avoiding that question a little longer. He sent a mild tickling charm towards the sleepy little stone bird. Dudley whipped her head towards Harry and gobbled up the spell as soon as it got near her. She hopped up briefly, shooting flames out her backside.

"Whoa! Sweet!" Harry exclaimed. "Dudley, you rule!"

Remus rubbed the alcohol haze from his eyes. "Did she... umm... fart flames?"

Harry nodded. "Yeah, she did. And check this out. Dudley?" Harry called out to the bird on the desk. "Fire!"

Albus hopped out of his seat when the little squirmy gargoyle exploded into searing flames scorching his desk. "Great googahmoogah!"

Even Fawkes' eyes widened at this one.

Dudley seemed to be getting used to her fire form and started lazily floating around the room.

Harry said, "Let's see if you can do that again." He cast another mild tickling charm her way only to see the fire bird swoop down and swallow up the spell. A beat passed as she hovered in the air before dropping a heavy stone into the Headmaster's waiting lap.

An exclamation of "Ooof," trailed off into a high-pitched whine as it seemed the Headmaster was caught unprepared.

"Dudley just shat a brick," Sirius called out immensely impressed. "That's bloody awesome!" He just now noticed Dudley was hovering over the Headmaster's head while Albus was keeled over, clutching his lap. "Stone!" Sirius called out happily.

A pain-filled groan followed the loud crack as Dudley's stone bird body slammed into the base of the Headmaster's skull.

"Nice shot, Padfoot," Harry complimented.

Remus began to wonder about the Headmaster's health. "Your Dark Lord days might be closer than you think."

"I'm okay," the muffled voice from behind the desk called out. "I don't need any help." He insisted while Remus and Harry stayed in their seats unconcerned for the inebriated old man.

Remus looked at Harry, who just seemed to be unable to stop smiling. Harry finally called out, "Fire!"

"Aieeee!" the Headmaster screamed launching the flaming bird into the air.

"Come here, Dudley," Harry called out and caught the avian infant. As soon as he had a hold on her, he called out, "Stone!" and tucked her back into his pouch. "You can go back to sleep, sweetie." Dudley smiled and nestled back into Harry.

"Alright there, Albus?" a semi-sobered Remus asked.

The Headmaster grumbled affirmatively and tried to maintain some dignity as he sat back down into his chair. "That's fucked up Harry. Undeniably cute though."

James nodded proudly. "Exactly what I said. And that was even before I knew she could shit bricks."

"I think she's going to be fun," Harry theorized. "A nice mix of all three of her parents."

"Three?" Remus asked.

"Me, Fawkes, and Hogwarts," Harry answered.

Remus was trying to imagine what such a creature would possibly be like. "It does make me wonder how much effect you and especially Hogwarts have had on shaping her physically and magically."

Harry shrugged. "So far she's stone and fire. No idea on burning days, immortality, tears, or anything like that."

Albus agreed and explained, "I wouldn't have expected anything involving you to be normal."

Harry didn't think today would be a good day to try and win this argument. "I happen," Harry shrugged.

James, Sirius, and Lily found that particularly fitting.

"So, Harry," Albus tried again. "Quit avoiding the question. What have you done to the Dursleys?"

Harry furrowed his brow and was tapping his temple. "Name sounds vaguely familiar, but I'm drawing a blank."

"Lily," Albus asked turning towards the portrait. "What's happened to your sister and her family?"

Lily shrugged a little and asked Albus, "Do you believe in karma?"

Albus nodded at the question. "I didn't put much faith in it before last year. Now I have every confidence in her."

"What happened?" James asked.

When Albus blushed and didn't seem eager to answer, Remus happily threw out, "He was incapable of magic and got struck by lightning in the Great Hall."

James and Lily both deviously smiled at the image, joining Sirius and Remus in laughter.

"Yes well, I do believe in karma," Albus repeated trying to redirect the conversation.

"Good," Lily explained with a mischievous happiness. "Because I believe she's a vengeful bitch with a wicked sense of humor."

"Oh dear," Albus moaned fearing what could possibly make Lily so pleased. "Alright Harry. I'm dead serious now-"

"Excuse me!" Sirius interrupted impatiently. "I think I've got the trademark on... whoa!" Lily launched herself immediately out of her current portrait and floated slowly towards the picture with Sirius in it. He took one look at Lily's slow lunge towards him and hurriedly ran out of frame not to be spotted again. When Lily arrived in that frame she looked around for him, before giving up and working her way around the room back towards the couch her husband was relaxing on.

"Not going to chase after him?" Remus asked with a smile.

Lily shook her head. "I'll get him later. I think I want to watch my son squirm uncomfortably a bit more here. As well as keep him honest. This should be fun."

"Thanks, Mum," Harry grumbled while Albus reasserted himself. Albus chose to avoid the words serious or dead and asked, "Some blunt honesty would be appreciated now, Harry. What has happened to the Dursleys?"

Harry licked his lips. "The Dursleys... right. Them." Harry weakly laughed. "Interesting story, actually..."

"Harry," Albus tiredly asked.

"I... sort of... may have... accidentally... helped," Harry carefully considered each word. "Well, helped isn't the right word. I mean I'm as much a victim here as anybody, you know? And it's... well... they..." Harry seemed stuck on quite how to phrase it.

Remus sighed too. "Harry... just say it."

Harry was rapidly losing the mental argument with himself and explained, "I guess the answer you're looking for is that I've kind of... maybe..." Harry's voice dropped to a quiet mumble as he continued, "possibly... turned the Dursleys into the first generation of dementors an eon or two ago."

Remus completely stopped moving, as he wrapped his mind around that one.

"You... you..." Albus stopped himself from over-reacting and truly began to fear for the fate of the world whenever he moved on to the next great adventure. His initial thought process came back from his brain with the acceptable response here. He loudly and indignantly exclaimed, "You did what?"

..oo00 THE END 00oo..

Author's Note: And we have reached the final chapter of my latest and greatest masterpiece. I've realized there are a few further down the road questions some people may have, so as I roll the credits on this final and finished storyline, I've included a few outtakes, or omakes (I can pluralize that way if I want to), or just general glimpses of the future.

Let me know what you think of the story. I will gladly reply to any questions. Don't be shy about asking for a reply, in case I thought your questions may have been rhetorical.

Additionally, a big thanks to IP82 and everyone else who helped me get these last two chapters right since I had an extra week of time to kill before I could post.

This Where in the World universe has been fun to write, but it's high time I moved on to something else. Even if the story only made you laugh, it's nice to hear that. Thanks.

-nonjon

..oo00 THE OUTTAKES OR OMAKES 00oo..

THE START OF THE NEXT SCHOOL YEAR

"Welcome to Hogwarts," Professor McGonagall began as per her usual routine for all the first years. "The start-of-term banquet will begin shortly..."

"Ahhhhhh!" Professor Trelawney screamed as she ran past. "It's the grim! We're all going to die!"

Professor McGonagall shook her head ignoring Sybill's usual predictions. "As I was saying, before you take your seats in the Great Hall, you will be sorted into your houses. The Sorting is a very important ceremony because..."

"Oh dear god, save me!" Sybill screeched as she ran back the other way. "The grim talks! The grim talks!"

"I'm coming to get you!" A man called out as he ran past in a portrait, before stopping as he noticed the students. "Oh... hello. Welcome to Hogwarts!"

"Hi Uncle Padfoot!" Simon exclaimed loudly.

"Hey Simon! How was the boat ride?"

“Awesome!” Simon cheered. “I only fell once though! Hagrid kept holding me back after that.”

“Nice!” Sirius cheered, ignoring the attention from all the other students.

Minerva couldn't take it anymore. “Professor Black, that is enough!”

Sirius raised his hands in deference. “You're the boss. Please continue.”

“Let's hope there are no more interruptions,” Minerva began once more, ignoring Sirius' presence behind her. “While you are here, your house will be something like your family within Hogwarts. You will have classes with the rest of your house, sleep in your house dormitory, and spend free time in your house common room.”

Oblivious to Minerva, Sirius had memorized this speech and was mouthing all the words with perfect accuracy and a respectable impression of her right behind her back.

“The four houses are called Gryffindor, Hufflepuff, Ravenclaw, and Slytherin. Each house has its own noble...What is so funny?” She demanded unable to stand the twittering of the students' before her. Nobody spoke up to mention the faces Sirius had made on the house names.

“Would anyone care to enlighten me?”

“Don't tell her!” Sirius mock whispered, only get to Minerva's angry cold stare as she whipped back around to face him. “Relax Minnie, I was just... holy shit, that vein on your forehead seems to throb even quicker than it used to.”

Minerva just stared at him trying to remember all the spells Harry had taught the staff to keep his folks in order.

“You know, on second thought, I'm just going to go now...” Sirius said as he exited the left side of the portrait.

Minerva turned around to begin again on the students, only to be interrupted by Sirius' voice once more as he stuck his head back into frame. "You know Minnie you don't have to be such a stuck-up bitch." And Sirius was gone before she could even respond.

She opened her mouth to begin in on the house points when Sybill came screaming by once more. "The grim! It's back! And it's coming for me!"

The students all had scared wide eyes as they saw a ghostly dog chasing the woman away. The dog winked at them and said, "Arf!"

Minerva began to regale all the students on the House Cup and how their points affected it. One of the students, who was not paying much attention, asked, "Why is that deer fighting with that cow?"

"Where?" another student asked.

"In the picture, up there on the hill. That deer has been attacking that poor cow this whole time."

"I'm not sure they're fighting. They might be playing leap frog."

"No, no, I've been watching them this whole time. The deer is clearly eating the cow."

Minerva turned her head towards the painting in question and yelled, "Great Googahmoogah! These are children, and that's just unnatural." She hurriedly slapped her hands over the section of the portrait containing the deer and cow in question. She turned back to the frightened firsties. "No, they're not fighting. Those two get along just fine. Now umm... as I was saying the House Cup is presented to-

"Professor McGonagall?" Albus said as he stuck his head into the Entrance Hall. "You're still with the first years? What are you pointing to with your hands?" Albus gasped in shock. "Oh Merlin, Minerva, that is disgusting. We may need to have a discussion later about this behavior of yours. Now stop horsing around and get your rear in gear."

You're holding us all up... and I'm sure these students are getting hungry and tired of your shenanigans."

"But... I..." Minerva feebly tried to defend herself.

"I'm going to be inquiring about bad touches!" Albus sternly ordered before remembering, "And secret touches!"

"Aieeee!" Professor Trelawney shrieked as she ran into the Great Hall. The ghostly dog yipping at her heels, "Arf!"

"Ahh, such a cute little omen of certain death," Albus cooed.

A HISTORY OF MAGIC GUEST LECTURE A FEW YEARS FROM NOW

"I'd like everyone to give a hand for our Guest Speaker, Bob," Professor Granger announced to her fourth years as she gave him the podium to the by all appearances relatively normal guest speaker, and she took her own seat at the back of class.

"Thank you for that warm welcome," Bob quipped before remembering that was a joke only he would get. He began, "I'm here to tell you all about the real truth of where dementors started. There are a lot of misconceptions about dementors. Foul filthy beasts they get called. Demons created through the darkest of magics, unholy terrors and servants of the devil. Some people even treat them like rock stars, with hot witches throwing themselves at others just to get the chance to fluff a dementor."

"What's fluff mean?" A curious girl asked.

"Err..." Bob considered who he was addressing and decided to ignore her. "Moving forward, these are all incorrect. The truth is dementors have been around for thousands of years, the large majority of them living in peaceful coexistence with nature. Now their creation is where it gets really interesting. They weren't born and then existed for a long time. They were actually created by accident and then sent to the past. To protect the innocent I won't be naming any names today-"

“Was it Professor Potter?” a smart-ass Slytherin asked.

“What? No, of course not.”

“It was him.” The smart-ass insisted.

“Look I’m not saying who it is, was, or will be, simply because if it happens in the near future the person responsible must not know what he’s going to be doing in the future.” Bob insisted.

“So it’s one person and a he?” Another student clarified.

“Professor Potter. I told you already.” The Slytherin maintained.

“Ignoring any further baseless, false, and damaging accusations,” Bob continued. “It was an accident to three perfectly normal completely average muggle humans that started it all.”

“Muggles?” a student asked in shock.

Bob nodded. “Yup, muggles. There was a complication with their souls being expelled from their bodies and sent to a limbo for almost a year. Two of these muggles, let’s call them Vermin and Spittoonina were perhaps a bit crueller than was necessary in their life. Their son, Studly had been making himself a better person before his soul was wrenched from its body and locked from the mortal world. Here, the three souls suffered under what most believe to be some sort of retribution. For every moment they chose to make someone else miserable, they were made miserable. For every pain they inflicted on another without remorse, they received pain in return. Vermin and Spittoonina were under too much stress and dealing with too much madness, that they eventually succumbed to it and became the madness. Studly’s time was nowhere near as bad, but it wasn’t exactly figgy pudding either.

“Now, the complications arose when their souls were pulled back into their muggle bodies. For one thing, while they were gone, their muggle bodies had channeled a fair amount of magic.”

“What?” A kid asked. “How’s that possible?”

“Err... that part’s not important,” Bob insisted. “But the tricky part was the three muggles, two of which were completely nutters in the head now, did not want to remember their time outside of their bodies. Luckily there was a wizard, err... I mean an anonymous group of... okay fine, a wizard,” Bob acquiesced.

“Goes by the name of Harry,” the Slytherin mumbled.

Bob’s voice rose a bit to ignore the muttering, “Who was able to successfully cast a memory charm on the three muggles. But when he did, there were additional components mixed in no one knew about, as well as several unforeseen reactions. Eventually resulting in the flesh dying and decaying on the three muggles’ bodies, while sucking them back through a massive swirling time vortex of doom. It is likely the memory charm was a bit super-charged, and is the reason a dementor’s presence can suck your happy memories away and force you to relive your worst ones.”

“Wait a second,” a disbelieving student interrupted. “Are you saying dementors started as three muggles from a relatively recent era or upcoming one?”

Bob nodded. “That’s exactly correct. Now, here, according to the natural timeline is where the history of dementors gets muddled. The two parents, Vermin and Spittoonina got separated from their son Studly. But Vermin and Spittoonina had been essentially violent mindless beasts when they got their memory wiped. Studly on the other hand, knew his name and nothing else. He didn’t know what he was, where he was, he didn’t even know how to talk or interact with people, or even what people were supposed to be like. Until he found a wizard that could see him, he thought he may have been invisible because it was only other muggles around him.”

“He hung around muggles?”

“No, not very much.” Bob explained with a sad pout. “Even though they couldn’t see him, the muggles got frigidly cold and caught up in bad memories whenever Studly was nearby. Something about the

memory charm they received made them into creatures that sought out others' memories, like the charm was still mentally braining them. After a while, he learned how to hold in that imposing aura we associate with dementors. Studly then hung out in places he could like dank caves or what would pass for catacombs, taking advantage of his invisibility, learning about people, how to communicate, how to interact, and how to blend in when necessary. It was a couple of centuries later, as Studly was still understanding his place in the world, that he heard the people talk about the fear they felt over a certain mountain range. Now the terms they used and their ability to communicate was far less developed way back then, but the descriptions sounded just like what Studly was looking for. He hurriedly made his way over there and thought he had finally found his home.

"He had discovered hundreds and hundreds of beings like him. Dementors as they came to be known. All just milling about together, like one big happy twisted family. Studly found he was unable to communicate with the others like him, and after a bit of observation realized they barely communicated with each other. It was then that he realized all of these beings were the tools and creations of two others: Vermin and Spittoonina. Studly, Vermin, and Spittoonina had no idea who each other really were. Vermin and Spittoonina's vile animalistic instincts had taken over. The two had become mates once more and managed to produce all of the others."

"They made hundreds of babies in just a few years?"

"Well, it's hard to say how long it was, because we don't have records or any accurate measurement of time, but they weren't made the normal way, that's for sure." Bob explained. "We know they weren't humans that got turned into dementors by Vermin or Spittoonina either. Apparently, from what we've been able to piece together, there were born in large litters at a time, and it was the male, Vermin who carried them to term and..." Bob scratched his head in confusion. "I suppose... must have shat them out."

"You're making this up!"

Bob shook his head. "You have a better explanation on how to birth a male pregnancy?"

"Avada Kedavra?" a Slytherin boy suggested before getting hit by the girl next to him. "Oww, it was just an idea."

The girl frowned and asked, "Err... C-section?"

"Right," Bob nodded. "I'm sure the doctors or healers of that era will jump right onto that one. Anyways, it doesn't matter whether they came shooting out his pee-hole, ass, or he threw them up out his mouth. The point is Vermin and Spittoonina made a lot of them. And they used them to feed themselves. Apparently, the young provided them the most energy and sustenance, as they bullied their offspring overpowering them with their auras."

The students all looked horrified, though possibly for a variety of reasons.

Bob nodded. "They were creating these things, only as amusement for them, so they would have others to control, and rule over, as well as feed off of. Not the best sorts of dementors here. This is what defines the big difference between the first generation of dementors and the second.

"When Studly realized what these other two alpha leaders and controllers were doing, he resisted their attempts to control him. This led to a power struggle for leadership of the group, and eventually all of the offspring were holding down the two later identified as Vermin and Spittoonina. Seeing as how, physically, these creatures seemed able to regenerate their broken bits and were unconcerned about pain in any sort, Studly didn't know what to do. When he saw Vermin hurting another one just because he could, Studly let his instinct take over and managed to suck the life right out of Vermin and then Spittoonina. It is likely this was the first instance of the weapon now known as the Dementor's Kiss." Bob explained to the class. "It is also believed to be the only way to completely destroy a dementor. A Patronus Charm can drive them off, as it makes them ill, but even constant extensive exposure to a Patronus won't kill a dementor."

“But I heard that a really, really powerful one could kill them.”

Bob shook his head. “Whoever told you that was clearly full of crap. A lot of it. Probably stinky.”

“So the only thing that can kill a dementor... is a dementor?”

Bob nodded. “Exactly, and this reason is why for millennia now we have had a fixed number of dementors in existence, and only Studly remains of the first generation.”

“Couldn’t the others make more?”

“I’m glad you asked that,” Bob agreed. “And the answer is... it doesn’t seem so. Part of that is the second generation dementors are even less intelligent and more instinctual than the first generation was. And no aspect of that instinct includes repopulation of the species or desire to procreate. They only strive to continue to exist.”

“What about Studly?”

Bob chuckled. “Studly, he may be, but Studly remembers his life as a human. And there are some aspects of the process that require willing flesh. Studly’s flesh doesn’t respond to the dead decaying wretched dementor bodies the way you would need Studly’s flesh to respond, if there were any hope for that. I’m not sure anyone wants to imagine what Vermin and Spittoonia must have been doing. Not that it’s even clear if it would work with Studly. It might require a female first generation dementor, or perhaps Studly’s womb is incapable of holding a litter of 30 to 50 dementor spawn. Either way, as long as the dementors get along, there won’t be more and there doesn’t need to be. It would take one of them going rogue and nutso to even bring the population down at all, and with only one strong intelligent first generation dementor still around, they all seem pleased enough to enjoy guarding the convicted criminals of Azkaban.”

“Just the criminals?” a Slytherin asked with a smirk.

Bob nodded. “The innocent ones thrown into Azkaban because the Ministry repeatedly sticks its head up its own ass, aren’t much fun for

the dementors. They don't provide as much food or energy, and they usually cheat at gobstones."

"Hey now!" Sirius exclaimed from a nearby portrait. "I never cheated! I could barely think straight!"

The students ignored the crazy man. A girl asked, "How the heck do you know so much about dementors when it seems all throughout history we only ever had unanswered questions?"

"Weren't you listening? If he knows Studly's womanly desires, it stands pretty likely that he knows him!"

"Wait, so you know Studly?"

"Err... you know I just made up those names to protect them, right? They weren't really named Studly, Vermin, and Spittoonina." Bob pointed out.

"See?" a Slytherin doubter exclaimed. "He admits that he just made the whole thing up!"

"Now hold on a second," Bob insisted. "I only changed the names. The rest is the Potter's honest truth! Swear to Harry!"

"How would you know?"

"Yeah! What makes you such an expert?"

Bob shrugged. "Well, if you must know," Bob removed the illusion cloak that gave him a normal looking face as the student's all gasped. "It's because I was Studly, though my friends call me Bob."

"You?" the doubter continued. "You're the last remaining first generation dementor?"

Bob nodded. "Yup, check out my finger trick." Bob held up one decaying hand, with two fingers hiding, another being bent backwards, and gave off the illusion that he was pulling off his finger.

“Oh come on,” A muggleborn complained. “My uncle used to do that when we were kids.”

With a loud snap, Bob plucked his whole finger off and chucked it at the kid. “Bet he didn’t do that, now did he?”

The kid’s scream of fright and scramble to hide behind his desk was all the answer Bob got.

“Careful, Bob,” Hermione called out from the back of the classroom. “Let’s keep things civil.”

“Professor Granger?” a student asked. “Do you honestly believe that cock and bologna story he just gave us?”

“I’m a bloody dementor!” Bob insisted. “Why wouldn’t I know more about dementors than your history books?”

“You’re not a dementor,” the Slytherin assured him. “If you’re such a dementor, then show off this dementor aura you claim to have. Let’s see it. Come on.”

Bob’s irritation was growing. “You want to feel it? You sure?”

“Yeah, bring it on. I’m waiting.”

“I’ll do it! I’m not kidding.”

“Neither am I! I want it. Give it your best shot!”

“Alright, fine!” Bob yelled and let his power go.

Whump. Thud. Thud. Thud.

“Crap.”

“Hey Harry?” Bob telepathically pleaded. With a pop Harry appeared into the room full of students and Professor Granger, all of which were unconscious with their heads collapsed onto their desks.

“Dammit Bob,” Harry scolded. “You have to be more careful.”

“I know.” Bob frowned. “I did it again. I didn’t even get into our specialized form of telepathy this time.”

Harry lifted up Hermione’s eyelids checking for response. “Maybe we should put off the lecture on dementors a few more years?”

“It’s those damn Slytherins.” Bob whined. “Can’t I just kiss a couple of them to shut them up?”

Harry just shook his head sadly. “They’re just kids, Bob. They’re here to learn what we can teach them. Even if it means we have to force the nuggets of knowledge down their twisted racist ass-backwards throats.” Harry wisely pointed out, “We’re not here to judge them.”

Bob sighed at yet another unsuccessful lecture.

Harry looked around the room for something to cheer his friend up. “Alright, fine, Bob. You can kiss the blonde over there, but one is the limit!”

A SURPRISING VISIT TO THE SLYTHERINS

“Afternoon, Blaise,” Professor Malfoy greeted.

Blaise smiled demurely and greeted his longtime friend. “Draco, darling, always a pleasure.”

The annoying portrait’s head popped up out of nowhere. “Wait, Blaise Zabini? What the-”

The second most annoying portrait’s head joined him right after. “When the hell did you become a dude?”

Blaise looked at Draco who just shrugged, every bit as confused as Blaise was. “I may have lied and called myself post-op a couple times just to get someone to bed, but I’m pretty sure I’ve always been a

dude.” Blaise flirted, “Why? Know some lonely cowpoke needing a break from the ranch?”

“What?” James asked.

“For that special someone, I’m willing to tuck and tape.” Blaise smacked his full luscious lips together.

“Oh dear god!” James exclaimed in shock.

Sirius was rubbing his head. “Well then why did Harry... oh.” He suddenly recalled Harry’s defense of the incident as a misunderstanding.

“Ohhhh, I get it.” James said nodding with dawning comprehension. “You’re his Frank!”

Blaise was wearing a saucy grin and winked. “I’ll be his hot dog bun too, if he asks nicely.”

Sirius had to explain that one to James.

WHO KNOWS WHEN OR WHERE

“Trust me, Bob,” Harry assured him. “This is the most useful and all-around fantastic spell. It’s even got the standard incantation as the trigger words, so people will think you’re really casting it.”

Bob sighed and relented. “Alright, alright. So what are the trigger words?”

“Avada Kedavra,” Harry enunciated slowly for the dementor.

“Avada Kedavra?” Bob asked not even paying attention to the fact his wand was aimed towards the open door.

“Oh shit!” Bob called out. “Draco, I’m sorry. I wasn’t even paying attention.”

Harry just looked at the blonde crumpled on the ground and began trying to think of how to get out of this one.

"I feel so silly," Bob explained to the still prone Assistant Potions Professor. "I was just asking Harry if the words were Avada Kedavra and then you walked in--Severus look out!"

Harry's eyes widened a little further. His mind quickly processed all the murder-suicide scenarios that would make the most sense.

"Whoops," Bob said. "You'd really think they'd be paying more attention or would put up a shield."

"Umm, why don't we turn you away from the open door, Bob?" Harry suggested. "We need to practice on not accidentally saying the trigger words."

Bob was now facing inside the classroom. "I hardly think that Avada Kedavra is going to come up in casual conversation." Bob looked over to his left, the direction his wand had been pointing. "Oh my god. Where the hell did that guy come from?"

Harry was just shaking his head in shock. "He just bloody appeared in the middle of Hogwarts." Harry's mind relaxed a little as double murder-suicides were much easier. Jealous lover, cheaters caught in the act, piece of cake.

"Hey!" Bob exclaimed happily as he rolled the man over. "It's Hadrian! He must have been aiming to land by me in the future. That's so sweet of him."

"Oh my god!" Sirius' head popped into the nearest painting. "You killed Hadrian!"

"You bastard!" James cheered as he appeared next to Sirius with a smile.

"I..." Bob stopped. "I did what?"

“Hey, wait a second,” Lily yelled out as she popped in checking out Hadrian. “Does that mean he’s wearing a time turner that goes into the future?”

“Dibs!” Harry called out immediately as he ran over and grabbed the ornate instrument from off Hadrian’s neck. Harry licked it immediately to lay his claim over it. “I licked it! That means it’s mine!”

Bob began to kick his unmoving friend on the ground. “Harry? What does that spell actually do?”

Lily huffed to her son. “Well, what are you waiting for? Go check out the future and see if things turn out okay!”

Harry nodded eagerly and double checked to make sure he had a regular time turner with him before disappearing from view.

“How long do you think he’ll be gone?” James asked.

“If we’re lucky, a couple of centuries,” Bob retorted.

With a pop, Harry Potter reappeared in the exact same place. “Yes! Yes! YES!” Harry cheered and pumped his fist. “That’s bloody awesome!”

“What is it?” Lily asked curiously. “What did you find out?”

Harry grinned as proud as a new father. “They renamed sex after me!”

Sirius’ eyes widened. “No fucking way.”

Harry pumped his fist again. “That was number two on my list of things to accomplish before I die.”

“Oh?” James asked. “So you did die?”

Harry stopped and frowned. “Didn’t think to ask that.”

"No really, Harry," Bob moaned. "Come on, tell me. What does Avada Kedavra do?"

"Ginny!" Harry screamed. "Duck!"

SOMETIME IN THE NEXT YEAR

"Mr. Potter! You lied to me!" Deputy Head Hollings blustered.

Harry looked as innocent as he could and said, "Moi?"

"You told me those were research partners under Polyjuice to look like your deceased relatives!"

Harry nodded. "That's correct."

"No it's not! Those were your deceased relatives!"

"Hey now," Harry complained. "I never admitted to who it was that was hiding behind Polyjuice to look like my dead relatives. If it has become public knowledge just who had been hiding under those guises, that doesn't change the veracity of my previous claims."

"What?"

Harry rolled his eyes, "As I'm sure you have jumped to the conclusion that the three partners I was using last year were Sirius Black, and James and Lily Potter. But that doesn't change the truth that I was hiding their identities and using a permanent Polyjuice to keep them secret."

"But then you were tinkering in necromancy!"

Harry shook his head. "Wasn't I cleared of those false accusations last year?"

"But they weren't false!"

"Of course they were," Harry insisted. "An experiment may have taken a wrong turn and unintentionally resurrected the souls of some people very dear to me, but I would never intentionally dabble in the blackest arts."

"So it wasn't intentional that they were brought back?"

"Not at all," Harry shrugged. "Just like I was to my parents, they were to me: a happy accident because we weren't careful."

"Well, why didn't you just say that in the first place?"

Harry raised an eyebrow. "Would you honestly have believed me? Accidental necromancy I'm told is a hard sell."

Hollings shrugged. "Were it anyone else? No. But with you? Meh..." Augustus shrugged. "I've met your parents. You're a lot more powerful but every bit as fucked up as they were." His eyes widened. "They are."

"Thanks, Mr. Hollings," Harry said as a tear came to his eye. "That's the nicest thing an ignorant elitist bureaucrat has ever said to me."

Augustus shook his head. "Merlin, I hate you." His eyes widened when the ground beneath Harry rippled and massive beast came up out of it.

"Whoa Dudley!" Harry gasped as the giant stone phoenix playfully shot up out of the floor. "No, I'm not leaking!" Harry insisted to his goofy pet. The entire ground rippled as the bird swam around the Hall floor with Harry on her back. "No my tears don't have any powers!" Harry held on as she was picking up speed in her playful romping. "You're thinking of my Elixir of Life. Whole different thing." The ride was getting bumpier and bumpier. "No! I don't you need to dry them! Don't you dare-"

Dudley dared. And she burst into a massive giant flaming pyre that singed and seared away every bit of clothing and covering Harry was wearing. Not to mention dried all the moisture from his watery eyes. "Oh god dammit, you cheeky bird." She gleefully shifted back into

stone and carried the naked Harry down through the Halls, whipping him past classrooms full of students, who weren't quite sure if they saw what they thought they saw.

"Where the hell are you taking me?" Harry begged as he clung to her neck. She was picking up speed and finally shot straight through the stone wall directly in front of him, launching herself and Harry hundreds of feet into the air. She flapped her better than seventy foot wingspan urging them higher and higher. Harry hurriedly tried to conjure himself some clothes, only for Dudley's tongue to snake around and gobble up the spell. A fwoosh of flatulence signaled the end of that spell. "Oh come on Big D, help me out here! I'm naked!"

Dudley just seemed to be chirping happily about that. As she soared above the castle, she flashed into flame and whipped herself around to catch Harry's naked body in her mouth. Harry yelped and screamed, but had to admit the flames tingled in a decidedly curious sensation. When she shifted back into stone, she made no effort to keep herself aloft and plummeted straight to the ground crashing into the Hogwarts Lake and beaching an unsuspecting Giant Squid. As Dudley flipped Harry around inside her mouth, she continued swallowing all the spells Harry kept trying to cast and caused small areas of hot steamy bubbling lake temperatures. Remembering to return a gift long overdue, she clamped her beak shut locking Harry's head inside her mouth and dangling his naked body up in the air. A billow of fire exploded whenever she'd crack open her beak a little and Harry's pale legs kept kicking frantically.

A floating ghostly Lily smiled and said, "Instant karma's gonna get you."

Next to her, a ghostly Sirius nodded and added, "Gonna knock you right on the head."

The apparition of James smiled and then frowned, turning to his wife and best friend. "What the hell are you talking about?"

Author's Note: These were the first few that came to mind. If anyone else has others they absolutely must see, I may tack them on here. Or feel free to write your own.